

35*

PHONOGRAPH

MONTHLY REVIEW

MARCH 1931

George Gershwin

David Ewen

Phonography in 1878

Harry Alan Potamkin

Paris Letter

Réne Lévy

Reviews of Domestic and
Imported Records by

Richard Gilbert

A. A. Biewend

Nicolas Slonimsky

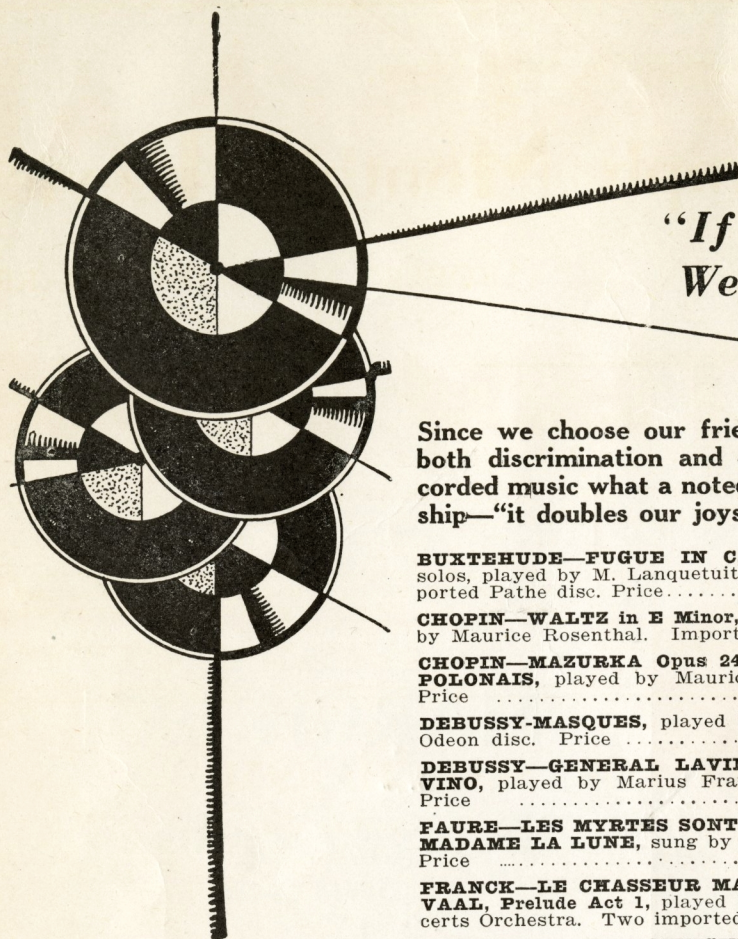
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Editorial

"PHONOPHILIA" will be a new name to most record collectors, but it is one of which much is likely to be heard in the future. Plans have been under discussion for several months for an International Congress of phonophiles and the formation of an International Association, to be called "Phonophilia"—a world association for the development of the phonographic recording arts." The idea originated in Brussels nearly a year ago in a conference between Henri-François Follin, co-director of *La Joie Musicale*, Paris, and M. Van Billoen, founder and president of a Brussels phonograph club named "Aspho." André Coeuroy, the distinguished critic and author, has been named president of the French section; the Fono-Club of Buenos Aires and other leading associations have lent their support, and definite organization is now underway. The *PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW* is of course delighted to add its support to this ambitious and far-seeing scheme for an international organization devoted solely to the art of phonography. Its progress will be announced in these pages. Meanwhile, those who are interested in joining such an association—which is open to individuals as well as societies—should write directly to the Secretary, M. Raymod Lyon, 36 Rue Vignon, Paris.

Brahms and Beethoven share first honors in this month's record releases. Max Fiedler's version of the fourth symphony from Brunswick and the Casals-Thibaud-Cortot double concerto reveal many sides of Brahms' talents in the finest phonographic exposition. The Beethoven is a hitherto unrecorded masterpiece, a work that was too meaty for Beethoven's contemporaries, and which has had to wait for the recording art to find general hearing: the *Grosse Fuge*, originally designed as the finale of the string quartet, Op. 130. Columbia, which gives the ever-admirable Léners the opportunity of recording this titanic musical conception, offers an abundance of nutritious musical substance in addition: the first major Chausson recording, the lovely *Poème* for violin, sensitively played by Enesco; Strawinski's *Capriccio*, about which I write elsewhere; Molajoli's version of *Tosca*; Chopin's *Fantasia* in F minor, considered by Huneker's and others to be Chopin's noblest achievement; and many other smaller works.

Brunswick's list, topped off by the Fiedler Fourth, contains a new Debicka recording, reviewed by Prof. Murdock under "Songs", and which is to be placed beside the Gluck-Bach record of two months ago among the finest vocal discs of all time. There is also an intensely spirited performance of the *Capriccio Italien* of Tchaikowsky, a remarkable piece of work in its ingenious adaptation to meet the peculiar demands of recording; and a continuation of the Wolff series. Victor's companion album set to the double concerto is the

first recording of Verdi's *Requiem*, in which public attention has been concentrated recently by the Toscanini performance in New York. Metropolitan release has been given the long-awaited Mousorgsky *Pictures at an Exposition*, in the orchestration by Ravel made familiar by Koussevitzky's performances with the Boston Symphony.

Mr. Ewen's estimate (elsewhere in this issue) of George Gershwin's happiest sphere in composition omits mention of four ten-inch discs that have given me more pleasure than those of the larger Gershwin works. They are Columbia 809-D and 812-D, and English Columbia 4065 and 4066. The first two contain hits from "Oh, Kay!", the latter two hits from "Tip-Toes" and all are played by Gershwin himself. Whatever the final verdict on the more ambitious efforts of the hero of Tin Pan Alley may be (and most of us are disposed to agree with Mr. Ewen), there can be no questioning the superb gusto and natural Americanism of these grand tunes played in keyboard arrangements that are at once the astonishment and the delight of the listener.

My editorial in last month's issue has drawn forth a great many letters, all of them written with the most intense sincerity and conviction. It is very heartening to receive such passionate assurance of support and encouragement. In return, I can assure our readers that temporary set-backs will not seriously handicap our efforts for the better appreciation of the phonograph and records. A number of dealers have also written me, and one of them has already entered our advertising pages. The conventional welcome is in this case charged with real sincerity, for Briggs & Briggs of Cambridge are another example of the type of musically-minded dealers we long since pointed out as the only ones who will succeed under the new conditions in the phono-musical world. I wrote last month of the old-style dealers forced to close up their shops because they had discounted the movement for the best music on discs. Briggs & Briggs are one of the infinitely more important groups that have very materially increased their record business even in a year of depression, because they handle not only the best records, but all the best records, and because they know that to sell music, one must *know music*. I don't need to speak again about the other dealers who advertise in our pages; our readers should be familiar with their admirable service already (if not, they should lose no time in becoming so), but it is a pleasure to see their tribe increase. The tremendous repertory of recorded music is of no value in a warehouse, it must find its audience through adequate outlets. Today the better records need first of all advertising—they must be brought and kept before the musical public; but of scarcely less importance are retail dealers to meet that public's expectation—and demand—for capable, intelligent service.

George Gershwin

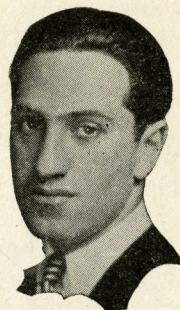
By DAVID EWEN

A critical estimate of the composer of the "Rhapsody in Blue"

IF George Gershwin is ever destined to attain that permanent distinction and glory as an American composer which more than one fond admirer allots to him, he will attain that distinction, I am convinced, not in the larger forms of music, towards which he is constantly directing an envious eye, but rather as a composer of song.

This is particularly emphasized, if the music-lover will avail himself of the prolific library of Gershwin records which have accumulated through the years. The phonograph companies have been particularly kind to Gershwin, and all of his larger works, and a bewildering majority of his smaller pieces, have been recorded and re-recorded, and any number of his works can be procured in any number of versions. Besides the almost inexhaustible list of Gershwin's songs which can be found on the list of every phonograph company and in dozens of varieties, there is his *Rhapsody in Blue*—a superb recording (although in slightly abbreviated form) by Paul Whiteman, with Gershwin at the piano, for the Victor Company; there is his Concerto in F, which Columbia Phonograph Company recently brought out in its Modern Masterworks series by Paul Whiteman with Roy Bargy at the piano (and, at the present writing, there is a rumor that the Victor Company will also issue the Concerto, with Fritz Reiner conducting, and Gershwin at the piano); there is the *American in Paris*, conducted by Nathaniel Shilkret for the Victor Company and, finally, one can even procure three of the Jazz Piano Preludes on a Columbia disc performed by Gershwin himself. A study of these records, as well as a careful hearing of his songs, will, I feel, stress the point I am making. There is freshness in the *Rhapsody*, originality and good-taste in the *Concerto*, wit in the *American in Paris*. But if Gershwin ever attains immortality, that immortality will have been brought to him by his songs.

Like Hugo Wolf, Gershwin instinctively feels in smaller patterns. His inspiration is hemmed in by the limits of the song-form. He cannot feel the breadth and the scope of the symphony or the concerto, as the great symphonists did, because his talents are constricted to smaller ideas. His imagination never sweeps relentlessly like an ocean, as did Beethoven's or Brahms's, so that,



George Gershwin

let loose, it could rush through the length of a full-sized symphony without a moment's pause. His imagination, instead, comes in fits and starts, and concerns itself only with fragmentary subjects.

Where, for example, lies the strength of his larger works? There is, of course, that magnificent slow section for 'cellos and saxophones in the *Rhapsody*, which is now deservedly famous; there is the sweeping waltz section in the first movement of the Concerto, the tender opening of the second movement as well as its broadly lyrical middle section for strings; there is the vitriolic "blues" portion of the *American in Paris*. But these brief sections are, after all, but songs translated into the orchestra; in many instances they are obviously patterned after song-forms. In such moments, his larger works glow with melodic beauty. At such moments he permits, without premeditation or excessive planning, his melodic vein to burst and to pour out its rich melodic blood. But when he steps away from the song-form, his pen suddenly begins to tremble in his hand, and his musical idiom begins to stutter. At such times—and such times are by no means infrequent—he reveals his meagre musical knowledge all too apparently. In the promulgation of themes he may be uniquely gifted, but in developing them—where technique is so sadly needed—his efforts are not always felicitous. There are pages of helpless paddings in all his larger works. From one inspired song passage to another there can be found nothing but series of aimless and ill-balanced chords to patch the whole together. Never does one confront, in his larger works, one sustained thought, one well developed idea. His *Rhapsody*, his Concerto, and

his *American in Paris* remain, at best, things of "shreds and patches."

But in the smaller forms—in his songs and in his Piano Preludes—he has produced miniature musical gems. Here, the one idea is developed to its inevitable end with clarity, originality and good-taste. Despite the fact that he has for so long a time been associated with the banal tunes of celebrated confrères in Tin-Pan Alley, there is nothing tawdry about Gershwin's lyricism. His melodies all have a original turn and twist to them; a freshness breathes through them like a gust of a spring breeze; one feels that something new is being said and in an original fashion. Listen to the second piano-prelude (the second prelude on the Columbia disc)—in which there is almost a splash of pathos; listen to *The Man I Love*, the very finest song to have been composed in America in our day; listening to the song-sections of the *Rhapsody* and the Concerto, and you will hear a spontaneous and unstudied beauty which seems to flow almost instinctively, and without recess, from his pen.

There is no end of ingenuity to these songs! *Fascinating Rhythm* has an intoxicating counterpoint of two different rhythms—3/4 is played against 4/4—to a melody that bubbles with zest and electricity; *Clap Yo' Hands!*, on the other hand, has a varying rhythm with each bar—to give the songs an altogether new vitality. Such little tricks as the lost beat in his most recent success *I Got Rhythm!*, as the suspended melodic line of *Sadie Salome*, as the change of rhythm in *So Are You* (a song, incidentally, featured in *Show Girl* which did not receive half the appreciation or comment it deserves!) clearly show that the pen which created them has an instinctive originality. No one can ever know what to expect in a Gershwin song; there is nothing trite or hackneyed in any of them!

But ingenuity and originality alone do not make a great song. To be sure, there is something infinitely more to Gershwin's shorter pieces—a tenderness, a sensitivity to beautiful melodic shapes, an undefiled and unspoiled beauty which is especially refreshing in these unmelodious days. *The Man I Love* is, after all, a very simple melody—and yet that intoxicating harmonic background of descending minor-seconds gives the song an altogether unparalleled poignancy. The caressing loveliness of such tunes as *How I Would Love To Have Somebody Rock Me To Sleep* or *Soon* is too effectively enchanting not to impress deeply, especially after several hearings. Moreover, the same pen that can so often be tender and caressing can likewise be stinging satirical. One has but to remember *Lady be Good* and *Strike Up the Band!* to realize this.

And so, just as Gershwin is faltering in his larger works, so he is sure of his touch in his songs. In his songs, he has versatility, he has artistry, he has no end of ingenuity. Above all, he has that rich, deep, intoxicating lyricism of his. The song is Gershwin's *forte*—and in the song, I am sure, he will ultimately gain a permanent prestige in American music.

Contributors to This Issue

HARRY L. ANDERSON, San Diego, was born in Guadalupe, Mexico, somewhat over twenty years ago, but despite his youth and the comparatively limited opportunities for hearing leading pianists in recital on the west coast, he is probably the leading authority on phonographic pianism. Some of the earlier reports on his studies as set forth in letters to the P. M. R. (November 1930, August 1929, September 1928, etc.), have been widely quoted in connection with the preservation of pianistic traditions, and particularly that of the Lisztian school.

DAVID EWEN, Brooklyn, New York, was one of the first to inaugurate a record review column in an American magazine: *The Reflex*, New York, some five years ago. He is the author of a life of Schubert and a study of Hebrew music which are to appear in the spring; and the editor of a critical anthology, *From Bach to Stravinsky*, scheduled for fall publication. He has contributed articles to the leading journals in this country and England (*Musical Quarterly*, *Nation*, *New Freeman*, *Gamut*, *Theatre Guild Magazine*, etc.). An article of his on the younger American composers appears in the January-February 1931 issue of *The Chesterian*.

RICHARD GILBERT, New York City, is the compiler of *The Gramophone Shop's Encyclopedia*, a contributor to *Disques*, *Musical America*, and other musical magazines. The February 1931 issue of *The Arts* contains his introductory article to a regular series of disc reviews, to be devoted mainly to a study of recorded modern music.

HARRY ALAN POTAMKIN, New York City (author of "Phonograph and Tonal Film" in the August 1930 P.M.R., and "The Progress of Mechanical Entertainment in Europe" in the July 1930 issue), has recently returned from a European trip with material on the progress of phonography in Germany and Soviet Russia that will shortly appear in these pages. His review of Klein's monumental study of *Colour Music* is scheduled for the April issue.

NICOLAS SLONIMSKY, Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, has recently given a series of concerts in the New York and Boston, conducting the Chamber Orchestra of Boston. See also the note in the November 1930 issue, page 44. His next concerts will be in Habana, Cuba, on March 10th.

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First Years of The Phonograph

By HARRY ALAN POTAMKIN

An 1878 prophecy of modern phonography

THOMAS EDISON, recently quoted on his birthday anniversary, has said that he found most joy in the invention of the phonograph. Leon Scott had invented the phonograph, the *recording* instrument; Edison invented the first *reproducing* instrument. It was 55 years ago that Thomas Alva Edison reproduced the vibrations graphically recorded. Sig-mund Theodor Stein in that same year, 1876, had photographed the vibrations of tuning-forks, violin-strings, etc., developing the work from Thomas Young's 1807 description of a process for recording the vibrations of a tuning-fork, the 1830 bibograph, Wilhelm Wertheim's '44 realization of Young's description, Scott's phonograph of '59—which was improved in Paris by Karl Rudolph Koenig, through Barlow's logograph, the manometric flame invention of Wheatstone-Koenig, and Clarence Blake's drum-head logograph. Stein came, followed by Edison, who patented his tinfoil phonograph in January 1877. That year Charles Cros deposited a sealed paper with the Paris Academy of Sciences (April 30), opened on December 3, which dealt with the reproduction of recorded sound-vibrations. The idea was not an individual monopoly, but Edison had anticipated it in patent. Then came Edison's wax-cylinder phonograph, the Bell-Sainter graphophone and the Berliner gramophone. Between the Edison and Bell-Sainter progressions, Koenig had advanced the theory of acoustics with his treatise on "Some Acoustical Experiences." This epitome of known data introduces Mr. Edison shortly after he had patented his 1876 invention.

By 1878 Edison was already dwelling upon the uses of his invention. He did not foresee the fullest development of his invention in entertainment, but rather in commerce. Its uses were to him as follows:

1. Letter-writing and all kinds of dictation, without the aid of a stenographer;
2. Phonographic books, which would speak to the blind people without effort on their part;
3. The teaching of elocution;
4. Reproduction of music;
5. The "Family Record," a registry of sayings, reminiscences, etc., by members of a family, in their own voices; and of the last words of dying persons;
6. Music-boxes and toys;



Phonography in the '80s

(from "Le Phonographe et ses merveilleux progrès")

7. Clocks that should announce, in articulate speech, the time for going to meals, etc.;
8. The preservation of languages, by exact reproduction of the manner of pronouncing;
9. Educational purposes, such as preserving the explanations made by a teacher, so that the pupil can refer to them at any moment; and spelling, or other lessons placed upon the phonograph for convenience in committing to memory;
10. Connection with the telephone, so as to make that invention an auxiliary in the transmission of permanent and invaluable records, instead of being the recipient of some momentary and fleeting communications.

By 1891 Edison added: "... through the facility with which it stores up and reproduces music of all sorts, or whistling and recitations, it can be employed to furnish constant amusements to invalids, or to social assemblies, at receptions, dinners, etc."

The immediate commercial use of the phonograph as dictaphone was the basis of Edison's prophecies. (He extended the dictaphone idea into pedagogy, not at all a bad notion, but one that has not yet materialized. The phono-album has not yet supplemented the photo-album. Only very recently has the immediate popular recording of voices been invented, a dwindling conceit used by film-houses to merchandise their entertainment. Discs for teaching voice-culture and languages

were used early. By 1890 the College of Milwaukee was employing the phonograph as an aid to the Professor of Languages. The phono-toy and music box are familiar to all. The Braille system is still the blind's medium. The phono-clock has not superseded the chimes in the home or the whistle in the factory. The museum use of records came almost with the perfection of the instrument. In the '90s, Dr. J. W. Fewkes, who died recently, recorded the songs, tales and conversations of the Passamaquoddy Indians. The British Museum early preserved matrices of the performances of famous artists. In Austria in 1903 a public phonogram office was opened for the preservation of folk-records. The Guimet Oriental Museum in Paris has organized a disc-collection and given disc-concerts, and a Museum of the Word has been endowed in Paris for the purpose of recording and cataloguing vocal utterances the world-over.

The Phonogram, now defunct, said in November 1892: "We have passed the stage in pioneer work in which the phonograph only elicits the curiosity of the music seeker. The public now recognize it as a potent factor in the transmission and expedition of the day's labors." Utilitarian America saw the phonograph only as an accessory to the typewriter. Edison made much of the possibility that "authors can register their fleeting ideas on the phonograph . . . at any

hour of the day or night, without waiting to find pen, ink or paper, and in much less time than it would take to write even the shortest memoranda." Authors "can also publish their novels or essays exclusively in phonogram form. Musical composers in improvising compositions will be able to have them instantaneously on the phonograph." The oral novel has been realized, at a crude approximation, on the radio, but the phonogram-improvisation is still an idea. There has been talk about the phonograph as an instrument in its own name. The phonograph recital over the radio removes the performer another step away from the audience. But the phonograph-as-instrument has not been respected by composers even as much as the electric piano, the radio, the tonal film. In the latter—where the disc is the sound medium—there have been some good things done by Edmund Meisel who recently died in Germany, by Dershenov in Russia (for the animated cartoon) and by Wolfgang Zeller in Germany (his post-synchronization to Walter Walter Ruttmann's "The Melody of the World").

The lack of complete anticipation of the phonograph's uses recalls the fact that Mr. Edison discounted the practicability of the motion picture because it lacked phonographic utterance. Mr. Terry Ramsaye, in too-simple psychoanalysis, attributes this to Mr. Edison's deafness.

Phonographic Echoes

Electric Arc Loud Speakers

DEVELOPING a discovery of Alexander Bell and H. V. Hayes, Sergius P. Grace, assistant vice-president of the Bell Telephone Laboratories, has evolved a loud speaking electric flame that he successfully demonstrated to a meeting of the New York Electrical Society. Bell and Hays had found that when a telephone transmitter was connected across the terminals of an electric arc between carbon rods, the flaming arc itself would reproduce the words spoken into the transmitter, and at the same time beams of light were sent out which could be used to transmit speech up to a distance of several miles. On account of the limitations of the amount of power that could be handled by a carbon transmitter in those days, the voice of the arc was scarcely audible, but Mr. Grace has developed apparatus embodying modern amplifiers which give the "talking arc" a voice almost equal in volume to that of modern loud speakers. There are no moving mechanical parts: the air vibrations being set up directly from the varying motion of the flaming electric gases. A demonstration was also made with some experimental high quality records made by the "hill-and-dale" process and utilizing a new type of pick-up to obtain more perfect reproduction of the higher musical registers. Whether these experiments will lead to important commercial contributions remains to be seen, but they point the way to interesting further developments.

Broadcast Advertising Programs

An ingenious series of broadcast programs of electrical transcriptions advertising Columbia products has been used with good effect by Columbia dealers in recent months. Four programs have been recorded, each consisting of three single-

face twelve-inch records, each set of three discs comprising a complete program of fifteen minutes' duration. Paul Whiteman, Ben Selvin, Paul Tremaine, and Ted Wallace provide the music, each with a complete program to himself. Each program opens with Columbia's radio motto, the "Magic Notes." Louis A. Witten, a leading announcer, tells something about the music to be played. At the end of each dance selection there is a brief advertising description of the Columbia Tele-Focal Radio and Radio-Phonographs.

New Victor Models

TWO new radio models and a new phonograph-radio combination have been announced by the Victor Division of the RCA-Victor Company, all designed to meet the current demand for rock bottom prices with no diminution in quality. The two radio models are Nos. R-14 and R-34. The former is identical in mechanical operation to the R-15 (described on page 81 of the December 1930 issue), with the additional feature of Victor tone control. It sells for the lowest list price ever suggested for a Victor instrument—\$91.50, including Radiotrons. The R-34 employs the five-circuit, screen-grid, micro-synchronous principles of the earlier Victor radios; it also has the Victor tone-control, super-dynamic corrugated cone loud speaker, full vision tuning dial, etc. List price, including Radiotrons, \$121.00.

The new combination is the RE-17, a combination of the radio found in the popular Victor R-15 and a Victor Electrola. It employs a four-circuit screen-grid radio, a Victor pick-up and inertia tone-arm. There are seven tubes, four of which are screen-grid, and the cabinet of early English design, patterned in front with walnut finish, measures 41 7/16 inches by 26 1/4 inches by 17 3/4 inches. The list price, including Radiotrons is \$189.50.

A Survey of Recorded Pianists

By HARRY L. ANDERSON

(Concluded from the February issue)

OF recorded woman pianists, Mero and Samaroﬀ have been known longest to the American public. Musically and technically they are excellent artists—Samaroﬀ has presented all the Beethoven sonatas in series—and Mero, in particular, excels in works of a scintillating nature. Both, with feminine charm and brilliance, have contributed to the rather extensive list of Victor "one record" artists. The antithesis of feminine charm is Ethel Leginska's playing (Columbia), masculine in force, and to an extent, in concept; sometimes it is too consciously so, and then lacking in grace. On the whole, her choice for recording has perhaps been unfelicitous, although her Schubert Impromptus and Moments Musical are sound versions. The Latin sparkle and sentiment of Guiomar Novaes, the Brazilian pianist, give her access to the mood of the romantics; as a Chopin and Liszt player, she stands above others of her sex. Three records (Spanish Victor)—Strauss' *Ständchen*, Ibert, Villa-Lobos, etc., are the captivating fare of her new recording which might well be more extensive.

The English, popularly known as unmusical, have produced more eminent woman pianists during the last fifty years than any other country. Besides Fanny Davies and Leginska, there have been recorded Myra Hess, Irene Scharrer, and Harriet Cohen. Innate musicality, classic beauty of line, absence of virtuosity for its own sake, have marked the last three, particularly Hess and Cohen. Myra Hess' carefully chosen representation on records (Columbia) is a model for other pianists to follow—a group of works that, for its length, comes nearer than any other to being a true index of the artist's nature and ability. Also worthy of imitation is the unity of coupling—each record is an entity of composer or style, instead of the usual hodgepodge. Bach, Scarlatti, Brahms, Schubert (Sonata Op. 120 in A, B Flat Trio), Debussy, De Falla, Griffes, etc., are all played with a fragrant tonal beauty, poise, artistry, that leave little basis for choice apart from one's preference as to work. Irene Scharrer's art is more essentially feminine, but at times more brilliant. H. M. V. records of Scarlatti, Paradies, Mozart (Sonata in G), Purcell, are unhackneyed examples of her charm in the classics. Perhaps her recent debut for English Columbia may promise some two-piano work with Hess. Harriet Cohen is to make her American bow this season, but collectors may already know her for the first nine preludes and fugues from the Well-Tempered Clavichord. Noted for the imagination and musicality of her Bach, she is also a noted exponent of Arnold Bax.

The English line does not end with women. Harold Samuel's fame has come to him comparatively late, but in ten years he has won an unequalled reputation as a Bach player. His readings have clarity, beauty of tone, and a rather archaic charm. Like Busoni's they have a great philosophic strength, but tempered with more warmth. His English Suite in A Minor (Victor) and Partita in B Flat (H. M. V.), are stimulating works for the library. He has a penchant not only for Bach, but also for Brahms. His H. M. V. list of solo works and sonatas with the violinist, Menges, by these two composers is therefore significant. Musicianly, rather than virtuosic,

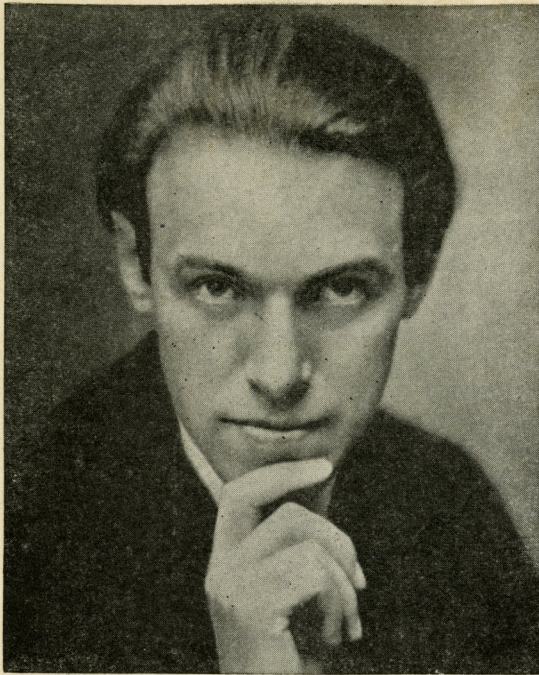


Ethel Leginska

Cuttner Solomon, William Murdoch, Evelyn Howard-Jones, and Donald Frances Tovey, have all been heard by American audiences in the East where, as abroad, their playing has caused considerable respect. The first three are recorded by Columbia in works of importance—Solomon in the Tchaikowsky Concerto, Murdoch in chamber music, notably with Albert Sammons, and Howard-Jones in the second Columbia album of the Well-Tempered Clavichord, and a little Delius disc that may hold unusual interest because of the pianist's participation in the recent festival. Tovey, recorded with Fachiri in Beethoven's G Major Sonata, Op. 96 (National Gramophonic Society), has triumphed over a considerably less than brilliant technique with such depth and intellect that he was encored recently in London after the fifty-three Beethoven Diabelli Variations.

If the English, and Germans, are prodigal in supplying pianists, the Russians, even since their internal troubles, have been inexhaustible; in fact, the revolution, if anything, increased the deluge by driving many of their musicians into exile, as in the case of Rachmaninoff, Siloti, Sapellnikoff, Prokofieff, Strawinski, and Pouishnoff. Leff Pouishnoff has been recorded by Columbia. Like Sapellnikoff (whose promised version of the Rachmaninoff Concerto for Decca was evidently routed by the composer's version), he has a polish, sparkle, and brilliance in music of the elevated salon style and the romantic that should make his recordings of Liszt and some modern composers popular. But that is only one side of him, and very Schubertian is his Schubert Sonata in G, Op. 78.

The last two pupils of Leschetizky, Benno Moisevitch and Alexander Brailowsky, like others from the source, have attained great brilliance. Moisevitch combines poetry, elegance, intellect, with a mercurial technique and a subtlety of tone. His fine Medtner and Prokofieff disk (Victor) entered a neglected field that the composers themselves might help to



Alexander Brailowsky

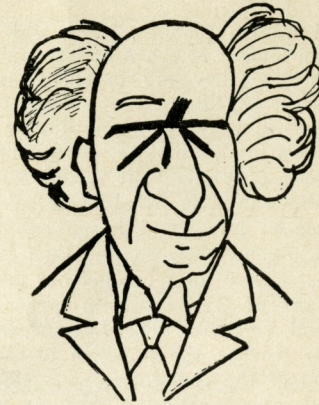
remedy. For virtuosity there is the Strauss-Godowsky *Fledermaus* Waltz; just issued is the only recorded version of Chopin's B Flat Minor Scherzo. For H. M. V. he has made the Brahms-Handel Variations, and some outstanding single records—notably Chopin's B Flat Polonaise and his celebrated version of Ravel's *Fountain*. Brailowsky's well recorded Polydor records are now being repressed by Brunswick. His brilliant recordings of Chopin, all of whose work he has played in concert, combine a grace with their power that should make them well liked. Very fine also is a Scriabine and De Falla coupling. More force than fluency, more brilliance than subtlety, are found in the Chopin E Minor and Liszt E flat Concertos, which are good examples, nevertheless, of his dramatic style.

The Liszt Concerto, as yet unrecorded by any of the great Liszt pupils, is also to be had by Mischa Levitzki (H. M. V.). An intellectual rather than an emotional artist, Levitzki has a remarkably clean, brilliant technique, but rarely much poetic imagination. His version of Liszt's Sixth Rhapsody (Victor) is noted for playing and recording. Rather introspective in style, the young Pole, Mieczyslaw Munz, has made a record for Homochord.

Of all the pianists to be introduced to the American public during the last decade, the one to win the most unqualified esteem among musicians was Walter Gieseking. Foremost in the espousal of the moderns of a group of pianists which includes E. Robert Schmitz, Richard Buhlig, Eduard Erdmann, etc., he is also unequalled as an interpreter of Debussy, one of the very great Bach and Mozart players, exquisite in Scarlatti and the Brahms Intermezzi. His one solo disk in the Brunswick catalogue should be owned by every piano record collector—Debussy's *Le plus que lente*, and Niemann's *Silver Cascade*—a remarkable example of the most delicate tone color successfully recorded. His promised participation in one of the Brandenburg Concertos failed to appear. Fortunately, Homochord have used his services more extensively in Ravel's *Fountain*, Debussy's *Reflections* and *Arabesques*, Schubert's B Flat Impromptu, pieces by Grieg and Richard Strauss. More moderns, Bach, or a Mozart concerto would be unsurpassable of their kind.

Altogether of a different mold is Vladimir Horowitz (Victor) who, with his amazing speed, brilliance, and opulence of

tone, has sent even a Boston audience into a frenzy, and has succeeded generally in electrifying his hearers everywhere. At present his technique is inclined to eclipse his other great powers, and musically, he has impressed less than Gieseking or Iturbi; in this respect, however, he is not yet in final form. His record of the Paganini-Liszt Etude in E Flat is an astonishing piece of work, from standpoints of both recording and playing. His *Danse Exotique*, *Carmen* Variations, and Debussy's *Serenade to the Doll*, are perhaps preferable to his other records. Horowitz' youth places him not far from the class of prodigies, the most uncertain of musical quantities. Another of the tribe who seems to be establishing himself as an exception is Shura Cherkassky, who has just been re-recorded (Victor) in his *Prelude Pathétique* and other pieces.



Max von Sauer

(from a caricature by Dr. Ricardo M. Aleman)

Through choice, personality, or any of the hundred-and-one chances that confront the concert pianist in the making of his career, a number of prominent European artists have either not come to America at all or, having come, have failed to show some of the characteristics that seem necessary to excite the American concert-going public. Certainly, the visits some years back of Schnabel, Riser, and Lamond did not provoke the recognition that their ability might have warranted. An artist who, I believe, visited America a decade or more ago, is Michael von Zadora. Although some of his records (Polydor) are of a rather light nature, he has made a very fine Bach disk. The more recent visit of Leonid Kreutzer was a greater success, without becoming more than one of the minor sensations of a season. His recordings (Polydor) of Chopin contain the more usual fare, but he has also done the Mozart Sonata in A (Theme and Variations). Lucie Cafferet (Polydor) has toured more widely in this country where her playing has been praised more for brilliance than for depth. Some of her recordings from Mozart, Couperin, and Smetana, are from the unhackneyed repertoire.

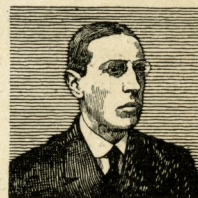
More esteemed among gramophiles have been some artists whose introduction to this continent is solely by repute and through their records. Josef Pembaur, of the old school, has given a musicianly performance of Liszt's A Major Concerto (Odeon) that has met with wide favor. Some importance attaches to the recent recording of the Spaniard, Ricardo Vines (French Columbia) in pieces of Albeniz and Debussy; now in his fifties, he was the first established pianist to champion these two composers and others of the modern French and Spanish schools. William Kempff is quite widely known in Germany for his Beethoven, and, more recently, his Brahms. Also he enjoys the distinction of being the only pianist today who improvises, on purpose at least, in public. As an artist, he presents many similarities to Bachaus, and his series of sonatas for Brunswick-Polydor ("*Pathétique*," Op. 26 in A Flat; "*Moonlight*," "*Waldstein*," "*Appassionata*," "*Les Adieux*;" and Op. 90, in E Minor) are sound, artistic versions of those works. Walter Rehberg, whose father, Wil-

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ly Rehberg, was also an eminent pianist, is responsible for the only recordings so far of the Schumann Fantasia, Schubert's "Wanderer" Fantasie, and Liszt's Spanish Rhapsody. His style is perhaps more brilliant than Kempff's, particularly in the Liszt. Eduard Erdmann, mentioned in connection with Giesecking, and Claudio Arrau, one of the most brilliant of the younger European pianists, have also recorded for Polydor. Modern works by Krenek, Tiessen, and himself are the more characteristic part of Erdmann's recording; and Arrau, whose records are issued also in the Spanish Victor list, has chosen some unusual pieces of Paganini-Liszt, Busoni, besides Balakireff's *Islamey*. Even more brilliant and powerful than Arrau is Busoni's famous pupil, Egon Petri, renowned as a Liszt player, who will visit America soon. Rather important results may be expected from his recent debut for H. M. V., who have a habit of issuing more piano records than any other company.

A number of recorded pianists remain if one wishes to add them to the list—Casadesus, Szreter, Singer, etc., A still greater number of undoubted importance remain unrecorded—approximately a third of the ninety-odd eminent pianists who can be, or could have been, recorded by the new process. For this the nature of the instrument is largely responsible. Although accessible to the amateur, it demands for full appreciation of its music a somewhat better rounded equipment than is required for the monophonic character of most violin and vocal music, without supplying the aid of such rich coloring as is supplied by the orchestra.

That the margin of unelectrified recorded pianists exists is, therefore, less surprising than that it should still include such significant names as Hoffmann, Ney Siloti, Friedheim, Goodson, or Iturbi (who will record shortly, however), and many of the eminent composer-pianists.

The End

PARIS LETTER

By René Lévy

(Translated)

FORGIVENESS will be granted to the Columbia Company for a multitude of sins (pardon!): accordion records "comic" skits, and so-called popular songs by virtue of the recording of the *Concerto* of Manuel de Falla, to which Columbia's disc transcription has just assured the finest, the most certain popularity. Much has been said in the last few years about music written directly for the phonograph, without such prattle having brought into being the hoped for realization. But this *Concerto*, unless I am greatly mistaken, constitutes the very prototype of modern music for the phonograph, without having been, I believe, conceived directly for recording. I see an almost indisputable proof of that: it sounds even better on the discs than in a direct hearing! This is due, I think to the fact that the leading instrument is the harpsichord, whose thin silvery sonorities, a little shrill in the midst of the plumper tessituras of the wood wind (flute, oboe and clarinet) and the strings (violin and violoncello) are avidly caught by the microphone, which has peculiar sympathies for the instrument dear to Wanda Landowska and which gives it richer, more prolonged tone qualities, surrounded by a sonorous halo that again puts this delicate ancestor of the pianoforte in the place of honor. On the other hand, the writing of this *concerto* miraculously conciliates density—each measure of it is charged like a beautiful fruit full of flesh and juice, with all the melodic and rhythmic savor peculiar to the author of *Retable* (*Master Pedro's Puppet-Show*), with the lucid and airy clarity no less characteristic of the genius of the *Tricorne* (*the Three-Cornered Hat*). One should not be at all surprised that the resulting two discs flatter the ear while satisfying the spirit. And I shall add this: in this *concerto* Manuel de Falla has taken the time and trouble to make himself brief; but this happy brevity, which has constrained him to reduce his development to the exact extent his themes require, assures this little work of solidity,—witness the architectural grandeur which makes the Parthénon more imposing than some gigantic skyscraper. As in his best works, he is inspired by the rich Ibèrian folklore, on whose themes he weaves a polyphony of such happy proportions that the ensemble is neither too light nor too heavy, while the lines harmonize to give it at the same time the impression of elegance and force. To characterize the execution it is surely enough to say that the composer himself plays the Pleyel harpsichord; that Marcel Moyse plays his enchanted flute, M. Bonneau the oboe, M. Godeau the clarinet, M. Darrieux the violin, and M. Cruque the violoncello; and that the recording re-creates the playing of these virtuosos in all its splendor.

And since we are speaking of "enchanted flute," that of Mozart is likewise represented in the bouquet which Columbia presents us this month in the form of Pamina's air, "C'en est fait, le reve cesse," sung by Mme. Germaine Féraldy. Although it is very satisfying in itself, I must say that this disc has not given me pleasure equivalent to a direct hearing of the beautiful voice of the singer; one must believe that this time that the microphone treated her badly in transposing to a higher register the airs which she renders in concert with a sentiment so true to the Mozartian art. It is kinder to her, however, in the air of the Countess from *Les Noces de Figaro*.

I shall not seek any transition to speak of the savory waltz selection drawn from Richard Strauss' *Rosenkavalier*, marvelously played by the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra under the direction of Bruno Walter. I have heard the latter conduct unforgettable executions of *Tristan*, of Brahms and Beethoven, but I do not believe that I am doing him an injustice in presuming that he proves himself nowhere capable of more sprightly inward joy or that he is more perfectly at his ease than when he interprets—with what *élan* and youth! Viennese music in triple time. Those who question the melodic genius of the last of the Strausses will surely be converted by this disc-evocation of a *joie de vivre* forever lost.

Correspondence

The Editor does not accept any responsibility for opinions expressed by correspondents. No notice will be taken of unsigned letters, but only initials or a pseudonym will be printed if the writer so desires. Contributions of general interest to our readers are welcomed. They should be brief and written on one side of the paper only. Address all letters, to CORRESPONDENCE COLUMN, Editorial Department, THE PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW, 5 Boylston Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

R. B. Reports on the new Columbia Radío - Phonograph

I HAVE been living an intimate musical existence with one of the new Columbia Radio-Phonograph combinations. I have found to my surprise and gratification that the comparatively spontaneous performance of the radio would sound lifeless and uninteresting in comparison with the more studied performance of the records themselves.

My first attempt was with old friends. I took a favorite Caruso record and lowered the pick-up lightly into the first groove. Finding the surface noise extremely disturbing I adjusted the volume button to the place where it no longer seemed quite so harsh and found that the volume for the playing of the record was exactly right. This will be found true of most every recording one plays. Too many have told of their experiences with the new beauties of old records by means of electric amplification to afford me an excuse to repeat them here but it will suffice to say that the greatness of the tenor voice will compensate you for the brilliance which is the outstanding feature of the electrical process. There is a thrilling depth and sonority about these records that the new instrument brings out with overwhelming power.

For instance the opening of the first Sibelius Symphony is the rumbling of distant drums with a single instrumental voice above it; Only until you grasp the effect of this great music can you fully realize what you have never heard from the radio itself. The same is true of the Boléro with its mad-denyingly insistent drum beat which is the very essence of the music and almost completely lost when broadcast. Also vital to almost any orchestral music is the rich under-current of the basses, lacking to a great extent in radio performance.

The statement of first performance in Boston or elsewhere for that matter does not need to enter into the phonophile's present scheme of existence when the newer recordings cover such a vast field. Senor Arbos was the gifted guest-conductor of the Boston Orchestra recently but his first-times were already familiar in the admirable Spanish Album. This conductor, who was once concert master of the orchestra, is an expert in the languorous shifting rhythms of the Albeniz' piano pieces which he orchestrated himself at the composer's request. I felt a certain friendliness with the music that he played that would have been genuinely impossible without the supreme joy of the phonophile, repetition and subsequent familiarity which far from breeds the customary contempt.

The statement a short time ago which expressed the evident truth that the lesser works of Strauss owed a debt to Dr. Koussevitzky as he was doing them a great service by keeping them alive reminded me of the excellent performance of the suite *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* which finds the composer of massive orchestrations in a rare mood, the miniature. He has gathered together a suite from his incidental music to Molière's play and written a little masterpiece of tone depiction, although the final movements are not to be compared with the opening for brilliance or musical content.

The Lener Quartet with the viola of L. D'Oliviera plays with superb execution and a wealth of tonal emotion the Mozart Quintet in G minor (Köchel 516) and the unique balance of the instruments through the serene beauty of Mozartian phrases enhanced a hundred-fold by the electrical reproduction.

I could go on and on, through the gray-blue skies of Finland, the Verona of Romeo and Juliet, with a human sadness at the cruel Artot who drove the young Tchaikowsky to some of his most beautiful music, the Chopin Fantasia with its piano a marvel of resonance and depth that the gramophone has never heard before, forever if necessary to tell of my genuine feeling of satisfaction that I feel today to be a phonophile, and have found a splendid way of enjoying the privilege. When one plays the old-fashioned instrument it is to realize anew the remarkable quality of the newer ones. Electrical amplification has brought a new background, for lack of better term, which encompasses the gamut of orchestral tone which was impossible before.

Auburndale, Massachusetts

RICHARDSON BROWN

The Farrar Discography

EDITOR, PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW:

In response to a number of letters questioning various aspects of my Farrar discography in the January issue, will you print the following information?

I have been asked why I did not utilize double-faced numbers where two particular records had been pressed together instead of the old single numbers. My list was first made up with the double numbers but since most of these records are only obtainable in single white label specially-made pressings, I decided to save confusion for purchasers and the Victor Company by using the older numbers. Otherwise one would have to order 6106-A or 617-B, for instance, and confusion is bound to arise.

On double record No. 616 there were two arias from *Madama Butterfly*. A reader has asked if Farrar did not record the *ancora un passo* aria for this coupling. No, she did not: the old 87004, made in 1907, was pressed on this disc. The inquirer drew his conclusion from the striking difference in style between this aria and that on the opposite side. The *Leri son salita* aria was made two years later which may account for the difference.

"Is the list absolutely complete?" If one means complete as regards existing master records, it is. However, a few of the 1906 Berlin masters were destroyed in the Gramophone Company fire and there was a *Carmen* duet (*Au quartier pour l'appel*) with Martinelli which was never released and is not available. The Victor people forbid my using the number when they approved this discography which was minutely checked by them in comparison with their records.

Some readers may have noticed a difference in recording date of the *Carmen* Gypsy Song. The H. M. V. Historical catalog has it 1910 whereas it was really made with the balance of the *Carmen* records in 1914. Farrar (to my knowledge) never sang the role of Carmen until the revival at the Metropolitan in 1913-1914. Of course I do not include the 1908 Micaela aria (88144) in this series.

I am writing to Miss Farrar to ascertain if she made two or more versions of the same selection. I am almost certain (with the exception of the early Berlin records of course) that she did not. The Berlin records of arias from *Mignon*, *Faust* and *Mefistofele* were never, to my knowledge, issued in this country but substitutions were recorded by the Victor Company.

My agreement is heartily with those who protest Miss Farrar's refusal to re-record. But rest assured I shall never rest from my present campaign of convincing her. She has been known to change her mind and I have confidence although my hopes have been blasted somewhat the past week. Years ago she announced her complete retirement at 50. She announced last week that she would soon make that retirement (she is now 49). I know for certain she is to make a New York appearance next Fall so I have a few month's margin left for my campaign!

Bridgeport, Conn.

WILLIAM H. SELTSAM

Cleveland Music Contest

EDITOR, PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW:

I wonder if many P. M. R. readers are aware of the splendid work that is being done with phonograph records in the annual music memory and appreciation contests conducted under the auspices of the Cleveland Orchestra. The eleventh of these contests will be held in April in the orchestra's new home. Severance Hall, which will be opened sometime in February. The selections played at the contest will be conducted by Rudolph Ringwall, assistant conductor of the orchestra. Entrants are classified in two groups, one made up of children of the junior and senior high schools of public, private, and parochial schools of Cleveland and Northern Ohio, and the other of representatives of adult clubs, societies and organizations of Northern Ohio.

The official adult list of compositions lists the following works, with reference in each case to the order numbers of the phonograph recordings: Schelling's Victory Ball (Victor), the allegretto from Franck's symphony (Columbia and Victor), the allegro con fuoco from Dvorak's "New World" Symphony (Columbia and Victor), the Allegro vivace from Rachmaninoff's Symphony No. 2 (Brunswick), the Andante con moto from Beethoven's Fifth Symphony (Brunswick, Columbia, and Victor), the Bacchanale from Saint-Saëns' Samson and Delilah (Victor), the Entr'acte and Valse from Delibes' Coppelia (Brunswick and Columbia), the Forest Murmurs from Siegfried (Columbia and Victor), the overture to the Flying Dutchman (Columbia and Victor—the new Brunswick version was announced too late for inclusion on the list), the Rondo from Dohnanyi's Suite (Victor), and the Flight of the Bumble Bee by Rimsky-Korsakow (Columbia and Victor—again a new Brunswick version was announced too late for inclusion).

The children's list includes movements from the "New World" Symphony, Mozart's G minor, and Beethoven's Fifth; Tchaikowsky's Capriccio Italien; the Magic Flute, Figaro, Roman Carnival, and Hänsel und Gretel overtures; two movements from the Fountains of Rome, the Gavotte from Bach's suite in D major, Ride of the Valkyries, Blue Danube Waltz, etc. The record references are mostly quite accurate, although the compiler slipped up badly by omitting the new Columbia recording of the Bach suite in D major, the only electrical recording. Also by omitting the Brunswick version of the Roman Carnival overture and the new Brunswick Mozart G minor.

The widespread interest taken in these contests and the careful preparations made for them both by adult and school groups make them a highly significant factor in the rapidly growing musical development of Cleveland and neighboring cities. The example set by these highly commendable endeavors might be followed with excellent profit by many other cities.

East Cleveland, Ohio

S. T. R.

A Fire Bird Deletion

EDITOR, PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW:

There is a point which might be of interest to some of the lesser informed readers. While comparing the composer's with Stokowski's version of Stravinski's Fire Bird, I note that in the latter on the last record side at the beginning there is quite a long modulatory chromatic passage in descension. This is taken up very softly by the string section. I do not find any parallel in the Columbia version, where it should be between the present 7th and 8th sides. Mr. Seltsam in his article does not mention this. Is it that the part the Philadelphians play is the ballet scene, whereas the composer's version is a concert suite arrangement? To my mind it marks one of the high spots of the Stokowski set.

Westmount, Quebec, Canada

A. H. B.

Note: Various versions of the Fire Bird are played in concert. That recorded by Stokowski is the concert suite, omitting the Supplication of the Fire Bird, the Princesses Play with the Golden Apples, and portions of the Berceuse and Finale—contained in Stravinski's recording, which adheres more closely to the original ballet score. Can any reader identify in the score the passage referred to by A. H. B.?

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More Sibelius

EDITOR, PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW:

Now that Sibelius has at last begun to receive the attention that was due him years ago, let us trust that the good work will not stop with the Columbia recordings of the first two symphonies—superlatively fine as these are. The companies should strike when the iron is hot, for there has lately been more interest in Sibelius—at least as far as New York is concerned—than in any recent years. Toscanini's performance of the marvellously beautiful *Ein Saga* should lead to the early American release of the H. M. V. recording conducted by Eugene Goossens. The *Saga* and the concerto for violin and orchestra are perhaps the only other compositions of Sibelius worthy to be ranked with the seven symphonies. Not only both of these have been given recent hearing, but there have been several performances of the first symphony, and in previous seasons the Boston forces gave us a hearing of the third and other symphonies.

Victor should surely give Koussevitzky the opportunity of recording the third or any of the remaining symphonies. His Sibelius readings are the only ones I have heard that can be ranked equally with those of Kajanus in the Columbia recordings.

To depart from Sibelius, another composition I should like to suggest for recording is Tansman's sonata Transatlantique, which has recently been played with enormous success by several pianists.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

J. H. SULLIVAN

The Tolstoy Text

EDITOR, PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW:

Could any P. M. R. reader, who owns the Leo Tolstoy record listed in the H. M. V. Historical Catalogue (E-158), furnish me with the text of Tolstoy's very broken English? I have tried to obtain it from the Gramophone Company, but even they do not seem to have a copy. "COLLECTOR"

Reviews of New Records

Special reviews of larger works / classified reviews of domestic releases
reviews of imported records

Brahms' Fourth

BRAHMS: *Symphony No. 4 in E minor*, Op. 98 (11 sides), played by the STATE OPERA ORCHESTRA, BERLIN, conducted by MAX FIEDLER. On the 12th side: BRAHMS: *String Quartet in A minor*, Op. 51, No. 2—*Quasi Minuetto*, played by the BUXBAUM QUARTET. BRUNSWICK Album Set No. 24 (6 D12s, Alb., \$9.00).

Three years have elapsed since the Fourth was first recorded. The Abendroth version, reviewed in the January 1928 P. M. R., was a good performance let down somewhat by the recording, and never a marked success. The new Fourth has no such handicap because the present-day recording can cope more successfully with the problems set by Brahms.

Max Fiedler, who is now in his seventy-first year, led the Boston Symphony during the seasons of 1908 to 1912. He has since been musical director at Essen. To those of us whose appetites have been whetted by striking performances, by trick interpretations whereby the composer is put through his paces by a showman wielder of the baton, the venerable conductor's reading of the music here may seem somewhat disappointing on a first hearing. Familiarity with the performance reveals its qualities more convincingly. The intense sincerity of the conductor is unquestionable, and while his is not the wholly athletic Brahms of present favor, he succeeds admirably in catching the more traditional Brahmsian spirit. There are moments when one feels that his spirit exceeds his powers, that he is left almost breathless, but the work as a whole is permeated with rich spirit, and many precious passages evoke miraculously the glory of the past.

The first moment is wholly satisfying. It is broadly conceived and logically carried through. The effect of the climactic moments is heightened by the retarding of the rhythm of the ballad-like theme and by speeding up the measures at the close. In the lovely andante of sombre tints, a looseness

of rhythm disturbs the continuity, but this is more than offset by the beautiful playing of the horns—which throughout is the outstanding feature of this recording. (And this work has been justly termed a symphony for the horns.) The third movement is more completely in the vein. There is a buoyancy of spirit and sportiveness, aptly contrasted with lyric tenderness. We could wish, however, for more care in bringing out the details—sometimes loss in the sweep of the movement as a whole—and greater transparency of tone in the lower registers. In the magnificent finale, one of Brahms' best conceptions, we notice most the conductor's lack of flexibility, although there is no lack of impressiveness. Perhaps the super-virile readings of this great passacaglia in vogue with American conductors have concentrated attention too strongly on the sheerly dynamic power of the music. Herr Fiedler returns to the simplicity of Brahms' own reading (mentioned by Richard Strauss).

The recording itself presents something of an anomaly. The brass and wood wind choirs are reproduced with much realism and the tone is consistently excellent. The recording of the string sections occasionally leaves something to be desired; in particular, the cellos in their quieter passages, while not exactly self-effacing, are perhaps too shy and restrained.

The music has been written about endlessly, and the last movement in particular has been the subject of much argument among logicians. Is it a passacaglia or a chaconne? Present day hearers agree with Lawrence Gilman when he says, "whatever may be the correct designation for the form . . . there can be no dispute about the magnificence of the thing as music. It is conceived in the grand style, of which Brahms at his best was so assured and complete a master." And Specht writes: "One can only stand in wonderment before this microcosm in sound, before the unheard-of diversity and the soulfulness of these variations which, for all their apparant freedom, are so strictly bound to the thematic prototype that, as Hugo Riemann has shown in his extraordinary analysis of the work, they contain only twelve in excess of the 31 x 8 that should have resulted from a rigorous



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10 inch, 75c | { Just a Gigolo
The River and Me | Al Shayne |

adherence to the eight-bar scheme. It is a feast for the ear, this welding into one whole, this function of one member with another,—and the golden pails which the rising and descending heavenly powers hand to each other brimful of the gods' invigorating draughts that make human life in truth worth living."

It is easy to point out unequal merits in this—or any recording of such music, but the interpreter's sincerity and conviction tell most strongly. The great heart and intellect of Brahms cannot be missed; the set is an important and welcome addition to recorded symphonic masterpieces.

On the last record side the Buxbaums (or should it be the Buxbäume?) play the Quasi Minuetto from the A minor Quartet. The Buxbaum Quartet, "an offspring of the Rosé Quartet," has a dark, rich tone which is well suited to this delightful music. There is vitality and feeling in the playing as well as insight, and the recording is good.

A. A. BIEWEND.

Double Concerto

BRAMMS: *Concerto in A minor*, for violin and violoncello, Op. 102, played by JACQUES THIBAUD and PABLO CASALS with the CASALS ORCHESTRA OF BARCELONA, conducted by ALFRED CORTOT. VICTOR Masterpiece Set M-99 (4 D12s, Alb., \$10.00).

After the days of Mozart and Bach who thought nothing of enlisting two or three pianos or assorted instruments for the solo rôles of their concertos, the double and triple varieties of this form passed largely into discard. There are modern examples, but for the most part they are inconsequential—composed for an occasion and promptly and deservedly forgotten. Even the few worthy ones are neglected, thanks largely to their inherent demands. The present work by Brahms, assuredly to be ranked among the most significant of its type, has not been too highly considered until lately. Clara Schumann believed it did not have a future. Specht declined to consider it of authentic inspiration: it is not worthy of more than Joachim's "cool admiration." "It is one of Brahms' most unapproachable and joyless compositions. . . ." Most of the themes are "too short-winded, too dry, too introspective; something that is obstinate and mechanical drives the work into artificial motion. After the imposing opening in mighty choral cataracts, the music grows cold and rigid; even the bright passages wear a frozen smile, and the workings-out are like equations without unknown quantities. . . . Only here and there does a little melodic bud peep from between the cracks of a solid wall."

Time was when if the doctors disagreed the modest layman concluded that the music—whatever its ultimate worth—was too knotty a problem for him to cudgel his brains over. When the work was programmed—as a dubious reward to the principal violinist and 'cellist of an orchestra—the audience mused over the interminable and pointless anecdotes relating to the work's inception, the lists of first performances in Germany, England, America, and the adjoining advertisements in the program-books, while the two worthies on the stage fiddled frantically to no avail. Now, despite the affrighted cries of "canned music!" and "reduction of taste to mob levels!", the phonograph has taken the case out of the doctor's hands and turned it over to the layman to hear and judge for himself. The appearance of such a work as this on records is highly important; we are lucky to have it, thrice-lucky to have it in so athletic and healthy a record performance. I don't think the new jury will disagree, or that Judge Specht's verdict will be sustained.

"Artificial motion. . . ." Well, hardly, as exposed here by Casals and Thibaud in prime form, abetted by the former's muscular and well-schooled orchestra under the alert baton of Cortot—returning to his first musical rôle of conductor. His incisiveness finds better expression in orchestral tones than pianistic. Thibaud is pushed to tonal thinness and hardness, but Casals never. Together they play the work up to the hilt, swinging into it with the utmost energy and éclat. The justness of intonation in even the most elaborate display work is especially notable. Even Joachim and Hausmann in their palmy days would have had to struggle to equal this. Add adequate if not superlative recording (fav-

oring the soloists as would be impossible in concert), and we have a set that will gather none of the dust that has settled on is scholarly commentators' pages.

The work itself is indeed a symphony with solo passages welded inherently into the structure. Herr Specht is on debatable ground when he terms it "curiously sombre and contemplative," but he hits the mark squarely when he says that it deserves the name of "symphony" much better than "many scenes without song and many disguised sonata skeletons which bear it." There are three movements: Allegro, Andante, Vivace non troppo. The first occupies four record sides; the other two, two each. There are four energetic measures of introduction, exposing the germ of the decisive first theme. First 'cello then both solo instruments have a long and forceful cadenza. The orchestra alone announces and develops slightly the complete first theme. The second theme, previously forecast by four plaintive measures for wood wind interpolated in the cadenza, is formally announced by the strings, now molto marcato. Its character alternates in the development: forceful in the tutti passages, more lyrical in those for the solo instruments. There is a wealth of effective passage work for both solo instruments, and they predominate to the very end of the movement. The mood is effectively varied by the lyrical appearances of the second theme, and such quirky trill passages as those on page 38 of the Simrock full score and the syncopated episode a few pages later (both on the third record side).

The andante opens with a broad singing theme heard immediately by the solo instruments in octaves. This nobly expansive melody is developed very little even on its reappearance in the last third of the movement. The middle section is an ecclesiastical theme heard first in the wood winds with quietly rhapsodic responses and ornamental passages from the soloists. The brief coda combines reminiscences of both themes.

The finale is a rondo, with a principal theme of Hungarian character, heard first briskly but piano in the 'cello, then violin, before being taken up fortissimo and marcato by the full orchestra. There is contrasting material, most important of which is the strong, surging theme announced by the 'cello about one-third in on the seventh record side. The solo instruments are given splendid passages in double and triple stops, played here with tremendous gusto and breadth. There are scherzando episodes with the dance-like main theme tossed about gracefully on the bassoon or flute, or the solo 'cello and violin. The music surges with vitality; the thematic material is developed with increasing zest and power; and the soloists exult in display material growing in brilliance to the end. "Short-winded . . . dry . . . cold and rigid . . . obstinate and mechanical. . . ." With all due respect to the scholarly Herr Specht, the hearers of this recording will join me in a heartfelt "Bosh!" R. D. D.

Capriccio

STRAWINSKI: *Capriccio for Piano and Orchestra*, played by IGOR STRAWINSKI with the STRARAM ORCHESTRA, conducted by ERNEST ANSERMET. COLUMBIA Masterworks Set No. 152 (3 D12s, Alb., \$6.00).

R. P. Blackmur's article—"Necromancy," embodying a review of the *Capriccio*, and a caricature of Strawinski at the piano by Emma Bourne were published in the January issue of the P. M. R. I heard the imported pressings of this recording a couple of weeks before the first American performance of the work, by the Boston Symphony with Sanroma on December 19th. A few weeks later the performance was repeated in New York. The reaction of the American critics was scarcely as whole-heartedly favorable as that of their colleagues in France, where the work was first played on December 6, 1929, with Strawinski and Ansermet in their present rôles as soloist and conductor. Americans have not had many opportunities to hear the later works of Strawinski in the order of their composition, and the recent paths of his development are indeed somewhat bewildering to follow without sufficient experience of the works themselves. The appearance of recordings—and especially in the composer's own versions—is of inestimable significance, a significance

that few critics seem to take into account at all. But Columbia's splendid musical services in making such works as these available in first-rate recordings is appreciated by the laymen if not by their appointed mentors. Again John Doe steals a march on Dr. Cantus Firmus, and while the gentlemen of the musical press announce that Strawinski has discovered the eighteenth century—too late, it begins to appear that the alert phonophile is discovering the later Strawinski—too early. One remembers the ironic spectacle of the frantic rush for the band wagon that the *Sacre* presented recently. The chances seem to me extremely good that the spectacle will be repeated with the *Capriccio* and the *Psalm Symphony*.

Mr. Blackmur's summing up needs no augmentation: "Whether the *Capriccio* is a masterpiece, or whether Strawinski is a great genius . . . need not concern us; it does concern us that it is an interesting, exciting piece of music, which demands of us as little music can, all our ears and all our hearts." I hope that purchasers of the recording will forget all they have ever heard above Strawinski "returning" to Bach or Handel or Tchaikowsky, and listen to the *Capriccio* as music, not a musical campaign platform. Perhaps a few notes may help in attaining that end.

I have noticed that most commentators on the work give the impression—either explicitly or implicitly—that the *Capriccio* is highly, even incongruously, stylized; that it is a hodge-podge of ideas; even "cheap and bad music" that no amount of Strawinskian technic can cover up: Listening to these discs carefully over several months I am left with no such impressions. Familiarity burnished down the inevitable roughnesses of the first hearings. The work becomes more and more a perfect entity, moving smoothly and animatedly from the determined opening measures to the gay sonal carnival of the close. I quarrel with Mr. Laurence Powell when he dubs the work a "Capriccio for the Departure of a Beloved Russian." This is not the self-conscious nationalism of the early works, but only a Russian could have written it. It is full of the nervous, sardonic gaiety of the Russian temperament and, an intensity sharper than anything of Tchaikowsky's. Above the scampering piano passages that form the base of the whole work, the flutes and reeds pipe and trill their vivid tunes, until at the last the sky explodes in a glittering rain of shooting stars—street songs, waltz rhythms, dance tunes—all fused and re-experienced in the mind of one of the most powerful personalities of our time.

Of our time . . . therein lies the secret of the seemingly baffling division of the worth of the *Capriccio*, of Strawinski himself. For like Picasso or Thomas Mann, Strawinski expresses our time in expressing himself always as his present self, never the Strawinski of 1910 and the *Fire Bird*, or 1913 and the *Sacre*. It is not easy to keep up with men like these who are never content to relax and to repeat, but who keep on growing. But we learn to understand ourselves and our times only through such spokesmen as these. They cannot be interpreted in terms of the past, even in their own contributions to the past.

R. D. D.

Grosse Fuge

BEETHOVEN: *Grand Fugue* for String Quartet, op. 133, played by the LENER STRING QUARTET. COLUMBIA 67873-4-D. (2 D12s, \$1.50 each).

The *Grosse Fuge* was originally composed as the last movement of the Quartet, opus 130, and the work was even performed in its entirety in March 1826. Due to the general lack of understanding of such a prodigious finale, and the consequent advice of many friends, Beethoven consented to have the work published separately as Opus 133, however (composing a special new *Rondo Finale*). According to Bekker and other modern critics it is absurd for the two not to be joined nowadays, a privilege which is not, however, denied to the possessor of the Léners' recordings of the works.

For a very excellent analysis of this *Fugue* I cannot do better than refer the reader to an article which was begun in the February 1931 number of the *British Musician*, to which I am indebted for much of the brief information hereinafter given. From the first this composition was an object of ignorant and stupid, and even contemptuous comments. In 1906 Dr. Ernest Walker wrote that it was a piece of "uncouth inconsequentiality," and the *Oxford History of Music* is rather doubtful in its opinion. These misapprehensions were increased by the extreme infrequency with which the music was played due to the exaggerated technical and interpretative difficulties. Both the Joachim Quartet and the London String Quartet included it in their cycles at various times, however. But it is only now, particularly through the aid of the Léners, that the *Grosse Fuge* is coming really to be appreciated and commonly heard.

Any attempt on my part to do more than give a very unsupported and personal impression of the music would be both absurd and presumptuous. It has, of course, been a prime field for the would-be explainer and discoverer of symbolic meanings. D'Indy, for example, sees in it "an open war . . . between careless merriment and serious thought." But it is true that the music cannot be considered entirely without reference to some interpretation. Listened to as one would listen to a fugue of Bach, it would, except for a few odd moments, be quite incomprehensible—a mere unattractive display of technique. This apparent lack of concern with beauty of sound and form—amounting at times almost to ugliness—becomes understandable only gradually and coincidentally with an appreciation of the spiritual and even intellectual conflict concerned. (It never descends to the mere emotional battle of such a work as the first movement of the Fifth Symphony).

A short analysis of the form is quite essential to any attempt at an ultimate understanding. The first side contains a short introduction or "overture," of thirty bars, in which the main theme is announced. This leads directly to the first (double) fugue, in B flat (30-158), which is the most difficult part of the work to understand,—partly because of the unusual writing, for the first violin and the other instruments. This continues on to the second side where it is succeeded by an exquisite lyrical movement *meno mosso e moderato* (159-232). Part three contains first a scherzoesque section (232-273) which serves as an introduction to the second fugue, in A flat (273-492), also a double one. The main subject of this part already served as the counter-subject in the first fugue. After a short recalling of the *meno mosso*, and a repetition of the *allegro molto*, on side four, comes a sort of *Fantasia* (as the *British Musician* calls it, bars 568-657) followed by a *coda* containing a repetition of the themes and a final combination of the two main ones, in B flat and A flat, forming a wonderful resolution and peroration to the previous struggle.

The music itself strikes me as in a certain sense abstract, in that it does not impress one as primarily and solely adapted for the string quartet. One can see the technical reasons that it should be unsuitable to the piano, or the desire to avoid the colour and obscurity of the orchestra, but one never exclaims upon the perfection of the fusion of music and medium, rather, if one allows himself to be distracted from the music, which is here the all-important thing, one finds that it often lies rather awkwardly for the instruments. Certainly it is a difficult task which is laid upon the Léners, but it is one in which they have already proved their fitness.

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Of their performance as a whole Alfred Kalisch says: "The effect of the Léner performance is that of a perfectly clear exposition of a definite set of ideas. There is no torturing uncertainty about it, no roughness." In these last quartets, in general, it seems to me that these qualities are the most important and the most difficult of attainment. And certainly the Léners show us here that they have pierced the veil of misunderstanding and conquered the technical difficulties. The work stands exposed as lucidly and sympathetically and with as much beauty of playing as could be desired or imagined. Apart from this general effect, it is, as above hinted, almost impossible to criticize individual details—the music is so compelling and so transcendent that, provided even reasonably good performance is given it, it is sure to make its greatness fully appreciated.

One cannot close without expressing a debt of gratitude to Columbia, first for making this rare and superlative music available on discs at all, and secondly, for giving us in America a chance to obtain it in a domestic release the very next month after its issue in England.

ROBERT H. S. PHILLIPS.

Verdi Requiem

VERDI: *Requiem Mass*, sung in Italian by FANELLI, MINGHINI-CATTANEO, LO CHUDICE, PINZA and the LA SCALA CHORUS, with the LA SCALA ORCHESTRA conducted by CARLO SABAJNO, VICTOR MASTERPIECE SET No. 96. (10 D12s, Alb., \$15.00).

The last movement of this setting of the *Mass for the Dead*, the "Libera me," was originally written as part of the composite *Rossini Requiem*, in 1869, while the other numbers were composed chiefly in 1873, two years after the production of *Aida*, as a tribute to Verdi's friend and admirer, the poet Manzoni. Since its first audition, the music has been a battle-ground evoking the most virulent censure as well as extravagant praise. The issue was painfully complicated almost immediately by the German von Bülow's letter to the *Musikalische Zeitung* (for which he some years later made an apology to Verdi) in which he termed the work a "monstrosity" and below the capabilities of any average German conservatory study—rather absurd of anyone to write about the output of such an acknowledged master, of opera at any rate, as Verdi by that time was. Dannreuther, in the *Oxford History of Music*, writing somewhat more dispassionately, is content to say: "The expression of sorrow, terror, despair, supplication and hopeful expectancy in the *Requiem* is perhaps too personal and passionate, but it is sincere." Somewhere in virtually every article on the *Requiem* the words italicized above are certain to occur. But is mere sincerity in expressing one's own personal emotions and in creating a thrilling dramatic impression the only requisite for an ideal setting of such universal and timeless texts as those of the Catholic liturgy? The fact is that since the introduction of the modern orchestra-choral style, the *Requiem* has seemed to have an extremely exciting effect on all its would be composers. Even Mozart, in his celebrated setting, has allowed himself such a terrific piece of tone painting as is his "Dies irae." I conceive that a *Mass for the Dead* should rather attempt to calm the celebrants and give an impression of the repose requested for the departed soul, than to arouse terror and stir up the passions by *timidamente* shrieks, thundering drums and trumpet blasts. For the former purpose what could be imagined as more perfect than the other world atmosphere suffusing the gregorian settings of the text? How infinitely more satisfying, both spiritually and artistically is the original simple, yet somehow heart-rending, "Dies irae."

Unfortunately, the present version of Verdi's music is not by any means perfect. Since the solos are much more important and frequent than the choruses it seems deplorable that a better quartet could not have been selected. In the first place, so melodramatic are they that whatever restraint the music may originally have had completely disappears. They sing almost always much too loud, as for instance, in the last "Requiem" of the "Dies irae," which is marked *pp dolciss*. The mezzo-soprano, Irene Minghini-Cattaneo, is the best of the group, although Pinza is also notable for his comparative restraint. The chorus does the comparatively little work it

has reasonably well. The orchestra, which is frequently treated in an interesting manner, performs excellently under the direction of Sabajno, who conducts the ensemble in true Italian style.

The recording is perhaps to blame for much of the poor impression made by the soloists. In the "Kyrie" whereas they are very much in the foreground, the *pp* utterances of the chorus are absolutely inaudible even with the score. The quartet is constantly much too near the microphone—giving the *ppps* in the "Domine Jesu Christe" the effect of *fffs*, although the singers are partly at fault.

The opening "Requiem aeternam," is one of the most agreeable moments in the mass, and has the clearest choral recording to be found throughout. From the beginning of the "Dies irae" drama reigns supreme. The recording of this gives the general effect desired, but the *sotto voce* phrases of the chorus at the end are entirely imperceptible. The succeeding overpowering "Tuba mirum" is likewise brilliantly performed but again all choral detail is lost. The "Recordare" is a rather charming duet for soprano and mezzo-soprano, but is frequently spoiled by the blatancy of the former. The "Sanctus," "Benedictus" and "Hosanna" are set together as a fugue for double-chorus. The choir here finds what seems to me its best opportunity in the whole work and rises to the occasion very well. In spite of everything, it does not give the impression of supremely great music, however.

R. H. S. P.

Chopin Fantasia

CHOPIN: *Fantasia in F Minor*, Op. 49, played by MARGUERITE LONG. COLUMBIA 17018-9-D (2 D10s, \$1.00 each).

A critic once wrote that if somebody loves Sonatas and likes Brahms, it is highly probable that such a one would enjoy a Sonata by Brahms. I, the undersigned, admire Marguerite Long as pianist, and derive a tremendous musical gratification from hearing or perusing any of Chopin's works. It is therefore reasonable to suppose that I would enjoy hearing her play Chopin's Fantasy, one of the most moving (in both the transitive and intransitive meaning of the verb) works ever written for the Pianoforte.

So it came to pass that I received a tremendous musical gratification etc., (see paragraph 1) and, incidentally, confirmed the efficiency of the dialectical method. It is strange to reflect that Chopin is much more concise and by far more eloquently expressive in this Fantasy than in his Sonatas and Scherzos, in spite of the absolving title which seemingly suggests divagations and allomorphism. Once more Chopin amazes—not by his imponderables, which are subject to individual apperception, but by his technique—which is a matter of universal application.

Miss Long's performance is distinguished by the same qualities that marked her playing of the Second Concerto by Chopin. She projects her own personality into the dynamic rather than the rhythmic line of the work. In other words she does not presume to distort Chopin's rhythms in guise of revealing his soul. Instead she selects another and a far more artistic method,—she develops an admirable control of her dynamic graduations, which permits her to strike every note, or chord, with a varying loudness of impact. The tones, so individualized, acquire "meaning." I do not say that Miss Long is "infinitely" sensitive to dynamic nuances, only because I know experimentally that the maximum of distinguishable degrees in continuous crescendo or diminuendo, with the best specimens of Homo Pianisticus, is eighteen. In addition to her pianistic excellence, Miss Long is exceedingly phono-genic,—an inestimable quality in a gramophone performer.

With all this, the record of "Fantasy" contains several bald spots, inattributable either to the record-playing machine or quality of the needle. Also at times an effect of studio-echo seems to be uncomfortably felt. None the less this record remains a significant addition to the forming library of Chopin discs.

NICOLAS SLONIMSKY

ORCHESTRA

TCHAIKOWSKY: *Capriccio Italian*, op. 45 (three sides), and *Eugen Onegin—Polonaise*, played by the STATE OPERA ORCHESTRA, BERLIN, conducted by ALOIS MELICHAR. BRUNSWICK 90126-7. (2 D12s, \$1.50 each).

Although some may find it shocking, I must confess that I find such of Tchaikowsky's music which like this is very obviously aimed at display—and display only—ininitely more agreeable than his usually revolting attempts at seriousness. Such things it is almost impossible to accept in the spirit in which they were meant, but this undoubtedly and unashamedly cheap music is so stuffed with everything that is "sure fire," especially in the way of the uttermost in the orchestral brilliance of which its composer is such a past master, that it is quite easy to give oneself up to a noisy good time. Best of all, it is unmarred even by a breath of the frenetic nationalism with which so many of the shorter orchestral works are concerned.

Melichar presents a splendidly planned and executed performance, seeming to take into consideration almost every requirement which tends to make toward a good phonographic effect. In the matter of dynamics, for instance, never is a *pp* too soft to be audible, and yet the *fff* are all that could be asked, considered both absolutely and relatively. A slight hastening of the *tempo* above what would be normal in concert likewise shows this care for effect. The recording director proves a great help in the general impression. The opening trumpet call is made quite electrifying in brilliance. But never, even in moments of greatest racket, does it become impossible to distinguish the various instruments.

The familiar Polonaise, although played with the greatest vigor, is not quite so generally effective as the above. The two records, however, will make an excellent buy for those who delight occasionally (or frequently) to revel in uncurbed show music.

GOUNOD: *Funeral March of a Marionette*, and **PIERNE:** *March of the Little Tin Soldiers*, played by the ORCHESTRE DE L'ASSOCIATION DES CONCERTS LAMOUREUX, conducted by ALBERT WOLFF. BRUNSWICK 90128. (1 D12, \$1.50).

Even in such trivialities as these it is surprising what Wolff can do with a morsel like the introduction to the *Funeral March*; the rest of it is, however, rather unpromising material, which he contrives to impress with a certain mordant tang. The Pierné is a typical French sugar-plum, possessing a slight piquancy of orchestration but little more. The recording, it goes without saying, is of the very finest.

WAGNER: *Die Meistersinger—Prelude to Act I* (three sides); and *Prelude to Act III*, played by a symphony orchestra conducted by DR. MAX VON SCHILLINGS. COLUMBIA G-50275-6 D (2 D12s, \$1.25 each). (These records are undoubtedly from the same masters as the Odeon discs mentioned on page 350 of the July, 1929 issue).

The field for *Meistersinger* Preludes seems about filled, now that both Victor and Columbia have two each in their domestic catalogues. I think that the final choice must lie between the version of Bodanzky and the one of Schilling, however. As has already been said, it is a different problem. There can be no doubt that the Bodanzky triumphs in the matter of pure weight of tone, although this superiority diminishes near the end; but on the first side it is tremendously effective. Schilling's elects a slower and more even pace throughout, and it seems to me that in the last part, at any rate, the broadness gained by this, combined with the great clarity of parts, must force one to admit it most ideal. Two additional facts are also in the favour of the set as a whole: it is fifty cents cheaper, and the fourth side is filled by the beautiful Prelude to the Third Act, of which recordings are very scarce. The performance and recording of this version may be termed models in every respect. The keynotes are clarity and tenderness.

BEETHOVEN: *Egmont—Overture*, op. 84, played by the NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA conducted by WILLEM MENGELBERG. VICTOR 7291 (D12, \$2.00).

Although this is the sort of thing in which one would expect Mengelberg to be at his best, I was a little disappointed in his performance. Probably this was due chiefly to the superlative quality of Prüwer's recent version. Mengelberg's

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pace is quicker throughout and though the effect is more brilliant, it does not seem to me to be nearly as impressive nor as convincing an interpretation. The recording is much more sweet and mellow, and correspondingly lacking in realism.

R. H. S. P.

Light Orchestral

LEOPOLD: *Hungaria*, played by BELA SZIGETI'S CONCERT ORCHESTRA. COLUMBIA 2372-D (D10, 75c).

One of the better Hungarian medley discs; characteristically languorous and deftly fleet playing in Gypsy style, marked by good tone qualities and expert execution.

ELGAR: *Salut d'Amour*, played by the VICTOR CONCERT ORCHESTRA, conducted by NATHANIEL SHILKRET; and **PIERNE:** *Serenade*, played by the VICTOR STRING ENSEMBLE, conducted by ROSARIO BOURDON. VICTOR 22599 (D10, 75c).

A lush performance of Elgar's familiar sweet-meat and adroit arrangement of Pierné's Serenade for strings alone make a good salon or "dinner music" disc.

OSCAR STRAUSS (arr. DOSTAL): *Potpourri*, played by MAREK WEBER'S ORCHESTRA. VICTOR (International list) V-50030 (D12, \$1.25).

SCHIRMAN (arr. RALF): *Saschinka* (Potpourri of Gypsy Songs), played by MAREK WEBER'S ORCHESTRA. VICTOR (International list) V-50031 (D12, \$1.25).

Waltz and Gypsy potpourris done in Webster's customary suave style. The Strauss performance occasionally waxes over-honeyed, but the Gypsy airs embody some contrasts of more dynamic playing.

N. LAMBERT: *Serenade D'Arlequin a Columbia*, and **CHAMINADE:** *Air de Ballet*, played by the SEPTETO PASSOS FREITAS, conducted by FERNANDO CLAIRQUIN. COLUMBIA (Portuguese list) 1119-X (D10, 75c).

A mandoline-guitar ensemble disc considerably above the average of its type. The playing is pointed and energetic, done with éclat and vivacity, and forcefully recorded.

INSTRUMENTAL

Organ

BACH: *Fugue in G minor* (Entr'acte from Grand Fantasia, Book 2, No. 4), played by EDOUARD COMMETTE on the organ of St. Jean Cathedral, Lyons, France. COLUMBIA 2384-D (D10, 75c).

Commette's playing is so rhythmically invigorating, and the fine St. Jean Cathedral organ is so effectively recorded that it is a pleasure to hear them in material befitting their talents. The present fugue (carefully identified on the label) is one of the most florid of Bach's works in this form. The rich passage-work is capably handled here without obscuring the appearances of the flowing fugue subject, and as always in Commette's discs there is none of the blurring or inelasticity of rhythm that ruins so many organist's performances. A very noteworthy addition to the still too-small recorded organ repertory pressed in this country.

Violin

SCHUBERT (arr. KREISLER): *Rosamunde—Ballet Music*, and WEBER (arr. KREISLER): *Larghetto*, played by FRITZ KREISLER, with piano accompaniments by MICHAEL RAUCHEISEN. VICTOR 1505 (D10, \$1.50).

The ballet music is a re-recording of Victor 723; happily, the accompaniment is now provided by Raucheisen's deft pianism instead of a small orchestra. Needless to say, the playing is fine-fibred, elastic, and sprightly. The plaintive Weber air has not been recorded before. I fail to recognize it off-hand, but it sounds as if it might be a transcription of a vocal air. Kreisler plays it with befitting simplicity, free from any undue tonal richness and added expressiveness.

CHAUSSON: *Poème*, Op. 25, played by GEORGES ENESCO, with piano accompaniment by SANFORD SCHLUSSEL. COLUMBIA 50273-4-D (2 D12s, \$1.25 each).

It seems amazing that this work of Chausson's, originally for violin and orchestra, has not been more often played by the orchestras of our country, for besides being of a pleasing length, and embodying an extraordinary unity of conception, it is a thing of great melodic beauty. Chausson, as a pupil of Massenet and Franck, got from them those harmonic characteristics which immediately stamp him as a French composer. But his genius seems to me to be greater than either of them for it is not his harmonic or modulatory devices that make the most remarkable impression, as is often the case with Franck, but his unbroken melodic line, and his power of building up an almost unbelievable accumulation of "sweet melancholy," which latter, however, never shows a tendency to become morbid because of his uncanny intuition for contrast in tempo and in thought. Even in his harmonic technique, he surpasses Franck for his harmonies grow in an astonishingly spontaneous and beautiful manner, whereas with Franck we sometimes get the impression that he has said to himself "and now let us modulate." To gain an idea of the sustained melodic line of this *poème*, it may be compared with the most characteristic compositions of Fauré, who was a past master of this phase of musical art. The distinction lies in Chausson's ability to avoid too much introspection. His music is always *alive*; the dream element is there, to be sure, but it is suggestive more of "remembrance of things past" than of utter removal.

I can think of no artist more appropriately chosen to play the *Poème* than Georges Enesco. As a musician, in the highest sense of that word, he has few equals. As a violinist from a technical point of view it is true that he is surpassed, but is a work of this sort, that is of the least importance. His musical thinking, by which I mean his perfect phrasing and his thorough understanding of the musical sentences, is of the highest order. Add to this a tone of unearthly sweetness, or at times of glowing vibrancy, and absolute perfection trills, and some idea may be gained of the greatness of this recording. High praise must be given Mr. Schlus- sel for his artistic co-operation with Enesco.

E. Y. GILBERT

SONGS

MOZART: *Mass in C minor—"E" Incarnatus Est,* and *Alleluja*, sung in Latin by HEDWIG VON DEBICKA, with orchestral accompaniments conducted by JULIUS PRUEWER. BRUNSWICK 90129 (D12, \$1.50).

Again Brunswick brings to American record buyers re- pressings of Mozart items from the Polydor list. One, the "Et Incarnatus Est" from the C minor Mass (K. 27), is a bit from one of Mozart's best works which, like most of his church music, is relatively unfamiliar in this country. Hedwig von Debicka sings the lovely but exacting soprano solo with splendid sureness and purity of tone, and this record, like the Gluck "O del mio dolce ardor," previously issued by Brunswick, marks her as one of those all too rare sopranos whose voices adapt themselves fully to the exigencies of recording. The orchestral part, conducted by Julius Prüwer, is also excellently reproduced and the balance between voice and orchestra is admirably maintained. As in so much of Mozart the full beauty of the music can be felt only when neither voice nor orchestra is emphasized at the expense of the other. Everyone who knows how common such overem- phasis is in records will appreciate the successful avoidance of it here. The "Alleluia" from the motet "Exsultate" (K. 165) is already a familiar selection and one which has been several times well recorded. Elisabeth Schumann's version seems to be the nearest rival of this presentation by Brun- swick, but, even though there is little to choose between the two voices and the interpretations of the two singers, the Schumann record suffers by the comparison, so far as the or- chestral part is concerned, and its total effect is less satisfying.

K. B. M.

JACOB-BOND: *A Perfect Day* and *Just A-Wearyin' for You*, sung in English by ANNA CASE, with piano accompaniments by CARROLL HOLLISTER. COLUMBIA 2386 (D10, 75c).

Two American songs that had phenomenal success sung with familiar beauty of voice by a favorite recording so- prano.

GIORDANI: *Caro Mio Ben* and PADILLA: *Princesita*, sung by DINO BORGIOI in Italian with orchestral accompaniments. COLUMBIA 2370-D (D10, 75c).

The really beautiful voice of this tenor is not heard to ad- vantage in these numbers. The Padilla number suffers in comparison with the rare perfection of Tito Schipa's version and the Caro mio ben, common repertoire piece as it is, has yet to be recorded adequately. Either an artist feels it should be almost a show-piece or mars it with excessive sentiment—as in the present version—with phrases of too-great length and rhythmic exaggeration. I remember vividly Toti Dal Monte's exquisite performance, or Dusolina Giannini's ver- sion which was a despairing cry to one's beloved. There is certainly room for a similar phonographic performance.

CARL LOEWE: *Der Sell'ne Beter*, or *Der alte Dessauer*, (The Infrequent Suppliant), sung in German by IVAR AN- DRESEN with piano accompaniments by DR. FRANZ HALLASCH. COLUMBIA 50277-D (D12, \$1.25).

This song is not only neglected Loewe; it is one of the composer's least known songs and the grandeur of it makes one realize what a wealth there is of great lieder literature to be re-discovered and sung.

The title born by the label is the secondary one as given in collections of Loewe songs. We must thank Ivar André- sen and the Columbia Company for making one of them avail- able and only hope that there will be more similar releases. Why not *Der Erkönig* and *Walpurgisnacht*? Many singers have considered it an ungrateful task to take the time to learn these songs and then present them to an audience who are more inclined to appreciate the more obvious trifles than the masterworks of one of the great writers of song! This cannot be truthfully said however of the present day phono- graphic audience and they have shown time and again of their willingness, nay, eagerness to absorb these very works.

The present performance is the finest that this artist has given us and his co-artist at the piano is in every way worthy of him.

R. B.

OPERATIC

LAKME—*Où va la jeune Hindou and Là-bas, Dans le foret* (Bell Song), sung in French by LILY PONS with orchestral accompaniment. VICTOR 1502 (D10, \$1.50).

This is the second American phonographic appearance of the brilliantly successful young coloratura whose every appearance is greeted with sensational enthusiasm at the Metropolitan Opera House. Her rôles now include Lucia, Olympia, Gilda, Rosina and Filina.

The supremely exacting measures of the Bell Song hold no terrors for Mlle. Pons. Not only is the music admirably executed, but the purity of intonation is remarkable especially the cruel high note at the end of part one where so many eminent singers go astray. The cadenzas, in themselves unconventional, are sung with genuine bravura feeling and an admirably sustained quality of tone which bespeaks excellent breath control. The clarity of the singer's French diction adds to the effectiveness of the ensemble. Coloratura enthusiasts will appreciate this record and hope for some of the less hackneyed numbers, like Zerbinetta's aria from *Ariadne auf Naxos*.

I LOMBARDI—*Qual Volutta Trascorrere* (With Sacred Joy), and ATTILA—*Te Sol Quests Anima* (To Thee My Heart Belongeth), trio by ELIZABETH RETHBERG, BENIAMIO GIGLI, and EZIO PINZA, sung in Italian with orchestral accompaniments. VICTOR 8194 (D12, \$2.50).

The present day interest in Verdi's older works makes this release all the more timely. With Luisa Miller at the Metropolitan, Simone Boccanegra at the Berlin Städtische Oper, and Macbeth and Nabucco elsewhere in Europe, the present manager of La Scala, Anita Colombo, hit upon "I Lombardi alla prima Crociata" as the best way of observing the time-honored custom of opening the season with a Verdi opera, not imitating any other opera house and also giving opportunity for lavish scenic display and taking advantage of the locale of the opera as coincident with the time of the representation. Valid reasons as these proved necessary as the revival was not a success, and disappointment was widespread. The opera Attila is absolutely defunct, no other mention of it coming to hand but the present record.

The trio from I Lombardi was recorded acoustically but the present version does not need to suffer in comparison, the soprano especially being a notable improvement. Madame Rethberg's voice in fact records to better advantage in this instance than in any other within memory with the exception of the Flying Dutchman Ballad. One cannot be enthusiastic over Signor Gigli's lachrymose delivery of the tenor part, but the quality of the voice is in itself beautiful as always. Pinza records excellently here.

The excerpt from Attila is of the typical old Italian style, but good opera at that. It an interesting exhumation anyway and will probably turn up at a Metropolitan Sunday evening concert sometime soon.

R. B.

TOSCA

PUCCINI: *Tosca*, sung by Eminent Italian Operatic Artists, together with the Chorus of LA SCALA and the MILAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA. COLUMBIA Operatic Series No. 6 (14 D12s, Alb., \$21.00).

Tosca	Bianca Scacciati
Cavaradossi	Allesandro Granda
Scarpia	Enrico Molinari
Cesare Angelotti	Salvatore Baccaloni
The Sacristan	Aristide Baracchi
Spoletta	Emilio Venturini
Chorus Master	Vittore Veneziani
Conductor	Cav. L. Molajoli

Most opera lovers have forgotten or overlooked the fact that Illica, one of the greatest of the librettists, originally wrote the libretto of *Tosca* for Franchetti in 1895. He will be rembered as the composer of the ill-fated *Germania*, one of the works which Signor Gatti mounted to freshen Signor Caruso's repertoire. Madame Destinn and Signor Amato were others concerned in the performance. Two arias from

this opera are among the finest recorded examples of the great tenor's voice.

Strange to say Franchetti did not care for the libretto, feeling that this melodrama was unsuitable for a musical setting, anti-musical, in fact. Doubting his own judgment he called upon Verdi, who in turn was most enthusiastic. He liked the third act especially with the panorama of Rome as a background and its tense plot with splendid opportunity for an operatic setting. "What do you young composers want?" he asked. "If I had only had such libretti in my youth instead of the drivel I had to endure, what might I not have been able to do."

There have been interpretations of this musical Sardood-lemism that almost makes one agree with Franchetti's original idea, but the present version is not one of them, and affords a striking contrast in many ways to the version conducted by Sabajno (Victor) and reviewed in the November P.M.R.

Bianca Scacciati is first of all a human being, her career in this instance being secondary. You feel at her first entrance that she is more anxious to find the woman with whom her lover has a probable assignation than to sweep the stage as the haughty prima-donna. Her love for Mario is the one great force of her life, the Attavanti fan the fuel for the flames. Scarpia, the brooding villain, means naught to her, except the innate loathing that she unconsciously feels for him. The final denouement is the inevitable result of this fusing of hates and circumstance. Madame Scacciati has the beauty of tone, and suavity of melodic line at her command that is indispensable in the more lyric moments of the role. At climaxes she continually pushes her voice for dramatic effect and gains it. The end justifies the means. Similarly, her resort to parlando several times when she addresses herself to Scarpia is quite natural outgrowth of this intensity, which grows with the progress of the plot. Vocally her best moment is in the exacting Vissi d'arte.

She is ably assisted by Allesandro Granda. He does not, thank heaven, find it necessary to shout at all times. He is in fact a sympathetic lover, and one, it would seem, worthy of Tosca's affection. In the tender moments he maintains the same repression with satisfying results. The voice of Enrico Molinari as Scarpia lacks the sensuous beauty of Granforte, but since this quality has been dissociated with the role since its earliest American performances the lack of it here matters little. This Scarpia seems more of a matter-of-fact villian and takes this particular case as he has many others. Only when he faces death is there a change in his feeling and it is obviously too late. The subordinate parts are well done, the voice of the shepherd being appropriately juvenile without being ludicrous.

The orchestra is kept in its proper place, the background, and subordinating it to the action itself. The splendid balance in that usually confused last scene in the first act is a tribute to the quality inherent in the entire performance, restraint. The same chorus master has directed both choirs, so praise would seem to again be due to a conductor who is able to achieve such fine effects. Certainly not one whit of dramatic force and vitality is missing. Those who like *Tosca* will hasten to acquire this set.

RICHARDSON BROWN

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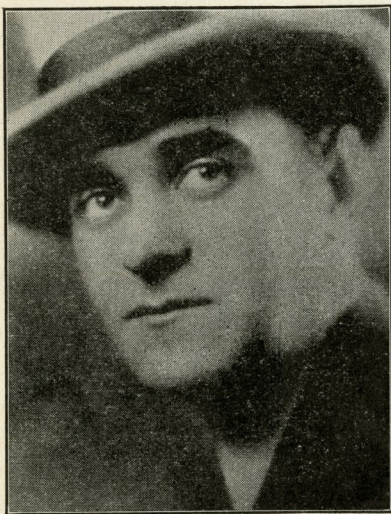
Keyboard

LEE SIMS manipulates the piano keys in his customary ingenious fashion over the apt material provided by two best sellers, *Body and Soul* and *Something to remember you by* (Brunswick 6040), while *Lew White* and *Fats Waller* demonstrate their contrasted talents on the movie organ. The former plays highly emotional versions of *Old Black Joe* and *Old Kentucky Home*, embroidered with all the rococo gadgets of his Wurlitzer (Brunswick 6019), while Waller is much less pretentious and much more amusing in infectiously peppy jazz by *Handy—Loveless Love*. and himself—*That's All* (Victor 23260).

Ensembles

The *Bel-Canto Quartet* sings *Softly and Tenderly*, and *Nearer My God to Thee* on Brunswick 6011; the *Columbia Vocal Ensemble* is rather more convincing in *Shall We Gather at the River?* and *It is Well with My Soul* (Columbia 2371-D); and William McEwan is heard in characteristically vigorous form in big-voiced, unpolished versions of *Pull for the Shore* and *Throw Out the Life Line* (Columbia 2385-D). Worldly music shows to considerably better advantage in the *National Cavaliers* highly rhythmic, well varied performances of two peppy songs, *Sweet Jennie Lee* and *Cheerful Little Earful* (Victor 22609).

Crooners



Al Shayne

Lee Morse and *Frank Crumit* divide honors, the former making a welcome return to her most characteristic material in a fine light version of *Blue Again* and the excellent blues from "Ballyhoo"—*I'm One of God's Children Who Hasn't Got Wings* (Columbia 2388-D—one of Miss Morse's best discs in many months), and the latter also heard in typical fare: an amusing nonsense ditty, *What Kind of a Noise Annoys an Oyster*, and a less amusing "nut" song, *Foolish Facts* (Victor 23515). *Al Shayne*, who like the famous bull-fighter rose from Brooklyn to a career of continental success, and who has recently won praise from Walter Winchell and "Variety," makes his disc-debut with an ingratiating performance of *The River and Me*, coupled with a dramatic and much less effective *Just a Gigolo* (Columbia 2383-D). Best of the field are *Chester Gaylord* who is heard on three Brunswick discs, 6028, 6010, and 6030 (*Would You Like to Take a Walk* on 6028 is the best of the group), and *Gene Austin*, heard to better advantage than usual in *You're Driving Me Crazy* (Victor 22601). *Seeger Ellis* appears for the first time under the Brunswick label in characteristically clean-cut, versions of *Lonesome Old Town* and *My Love For You* (6602) that deserve favorable comment.

Race

Best are the piano solos by *Mary Lou Williams* (a rambling *Drag 'Em* and fleet, well varied, rhythmic *Night Life*) on Brunswick 7178, and the marvellous clarinet playing by *Wilbur Sweatman* (a slow expressive *Got 'Em Blues* and a spirited *Battleship Kate*) on Victor 23254. Next come the male quartets—the *I. C. Glee Club Quartet* in slow mournful harmonizations of *When the Leaves Turn Red* and *Gambler You Can't Take This Train* (Okeh 8848), and the *Bessemer Melody Boys* packing amazing cross rhythms into their zestful versions of *When I Get Home* and *Didn't They Crucify My Lord* (Victor 23252).

DANCE

New Yorkers

COLE PORTER'S music for the most notable revue of the season, "The New Yorkers", again proves his high rating among the topnotch popular composers is eminently deserved. Waring's Pennsylvanians, who appear in the show itself, are at the top of their form in *Where Have You Been?* and *Love for Sale* (Victor 22598), both—but particularly the latter—fine tunes, treated, with delicate ingenuity and a fine variety of becoming instrumental effects. *Emil Colman* is not as effective in *Where Have You Been?*, but *I'm Getting Myself Ready for You* is a fine piece of vigorous, well-rhythmed playing (Brunswick 6006). *Ted Wallace's* treatment of *Where Have You Been?* is likewise quite routine, but the coupling—Donaldson's *Hello Beautiful*—is done in attractively graceful and blithe fashion (Columbia 2376).

Just a Gigolo

Casucci's currently popular European importation is ideal grist for *Ted Lewis'* mill; he sings and plays it in his most characteristic dramatic style (Columbia 2378-D). The coupling is more attractive, however: a timely *Headin' for Better Times*, a piece in the choo-choo tradition inaugurated by *Beyond the Blue Horizon*, and done here in peppy fashion. *Ben Bernie* plays the *Gigolo* song in appropriately sad style, although not as slowly as *Lewis*, and is also heard in a smoothly sensuous version of the *River and Me* (Brunswick 6023), while the Victor version by *Reisman* is highly polished, but lacking in character (22606—the coupling is an ultra-sentimental *I'm Alone*). Victor also releases a more elaborate and dramatic version of *Gigolo* by *Jack Hylton's* orchestra, which also plays *You're in My Heart Alone* (Victor 36031). The crack British band shows to less advantage here than in some of its other American repressings, but again the recording is excellent and the effects well varied and handled. The chorister in the second song is strongly reminiscent of *Tauber*.

Foreign Flavors

Red Nichols comes closest to equalling the original version of the *Peanut Vendor* in a fine performance, with English words, on Brunswick 6033, coupled with a sentimental *Sweet Rosita* treatment in similar Cuban style. Brunswick also releases an English version of *Two Hearts in Waltz Time*, played in somewhat stolid fashion by *Bob Haring* with a smoother *Chimes of Spring* on 6031. *Marek Weber* stars in Victor foreign supplement with graceful performances of hits from the German film, "Ein Tango für Dich," on V-6099; a popular waltz potpourri on V-6107; and a Russian fox trot and *Tango (Black Eyes)* on V-64. The waltzes are not very striking, but the Russian Fox Trot has stirring vigor and swing; throughout, but particularly in V-6099, the recording and tone qualities are very good. From Stockholm comes a bland waltz, *För Hennes Skull* from the film of that name, played by *Fred Winter's* orchestra, and coupled with an energetic fox trot, *Isabell*, by the *Revue Star Orchestra* (Victor V-24051—Swedish list). The Spanish craze is abetted by *Nick Lucas'* neatly turned version of *Lady Play Your Mandoline* (Brunswick 6013), and the *Havana Novelty Orchestra's* peppy *Little Spanish Dancer* (Victor 22602).

Novelty

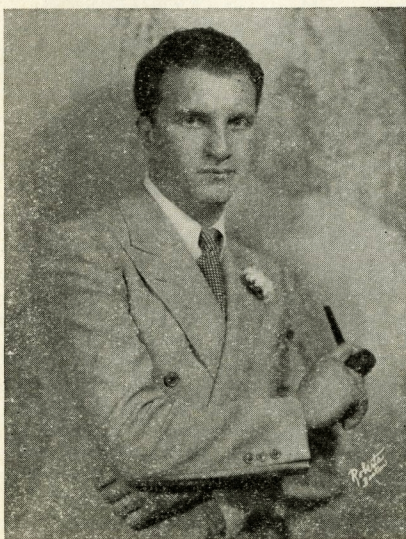
The choo-choo vogue mentioned above (Ted Lewis' Head-in' for Better Times) is subscribed to also by *Ben Bernie* who plays a "kiddies' hour" offering, Sleepy Town Express, on Brunswick 6024. The coupling, The King's Horses, is more amusing, and makes quite a catchy dance performance. Another piece well off the beaten track is The Wind in the Willows, played with Everything But Love by *Ben Bernie* (again) on Brunswick 6025.

Best Ballroom Dance Discs

BRUNSWICK: I like best *Isham Jones'* catchy version of My Ideal coupled with a good arrangement of a good tune, I'm So Afraid of You (6041). *Loring Red Nichols* does well with a brisk and peppery performance of Blue Again and a graceful Kentucky Bids the World Good-Morning (6014); *Isham Jones* is heard again in lively, danceable versions of Lonesome Lover and Just a Dream Come True (6015); *Ozzie Nelson* plays Fall in Love with Me and Truly in quietly restrained style (6018); and *Jacques Renard* is suave in I Hate Myself and Tie a Little String (6032).

COLUMBIA: *Guy Lombardo's Royal Canadians* are in top form in a deftly turned You Didn't Have to Tell Me (2379-D), and a dapper It Must be True (2390-D). The coupling in the former disc, Blue Pacific Moonlight, is a highly sentimentalized Hawaiian waltz, and the coupling on the latter, Heartaches, is not distinctive of Lombardo's best work. *Fred Rich* is routine in Tie a Little String, but his When You Were the Blossom of Buttercup Lane is nicely animated (2387-D). *Smith Ballew* and *Eddie Wittenstein* provide routine fare on 2373-D and 2375-D respectively, with the latter's neat Will You Wait a Year or Two the best.

VICTOR: *Ohman* and *Arden* provide brisk piano interludes in I Hate Myself and What a Fool I've Been (22610); *Leo Reisman* is smooth, but scarcely well varied in Hurt and He's Not Worth Your Tears (22605); *Red and His Big Ten* turn in a fast, peppy At Last I'm Happy, but If You Haven't Got a Girl is less colorful (23033); *Bert Lown's* discs are always noteworthy for their excellent tonal qualities: Say Hello and Heartaches on 22612 evidence these qualities, as does To Whom It May Concern on 22603. *Duke Ellington's* version of Blue Again on the reverse of the latter disc has a good swing, but is not as well recorded or as characteristic as his previous notable releases.



Mickie Alpert

Mickie Alpert and his Cocoanut Grove Orchestra, whose first two releases from Columbia (Hurt and We're Friends Again, 2344-D, You're the One I Care For and Tears, 2361-D) are attracting wide attention, will be the subject of an interview by "Rufus", illustrated with sketches by Emma Bourne, in the next issue of the P. M. R.

HOT JAZZ

ALL three of *Red Nichols'* discs make Class A, and one comes close to topping it: that is the two-part version of On Revival Day (Brunswick 6026), a marvellous rhythmic spiritual with *Jack Teagarden's* rhythmic exhortations and the fine chorussing predominating—a notable recording. Red also shows to good effect in a brisk You Said It and a very deft, ingeniously varied, Sweet and Hot (6029); Rockin' Chair and My Honey's Loving Arms are good, but not as markedly so, except possibly for the piano solo in the latter piece (6012). Columbia turns in a winner in the work of a newcomer, *Clyde McCoy* of Chicago, who does a grand piece of work in Clarence Williams' Sugar Blues, featuring ecstatically rhapsodic trumpeting, and a fine arrangement; the coupling, Readin' Ritin', Rhythm, done in peppy, graceful, and not too extreme style, is also a top-notch (Columbia 2389-D). The other two entrants are *McKinney's Cotton Pickers* with fast and highly colorful version of You're Driving Me Crazy, featuring a rich tonal ground-swell below, florid solo work, and some furious wawa work), coupled with a less distinctive Hello (Victor 23031, and *Cab Calloway's* delightful treatment of a fine rhythmic spiritual, Is That Religion? (Brunswick 6020). Calloway's coupling is a fleet, fire-cracking performance of Some of These Days, the work of an orchestra that should be heard from again and often.

Best in the remaining Victors are *Boyd Senter's* welcome revival of Smiles and a exciting version of Give It To Me Right Away, both featuring his own virtuoso clarinetting (23032), and *Bennie Moten's* fleet, interestingly developed Somebody Stole My Gal, coupled with a mild Won't You Be My Baby (23038). *McKinney* sounds quite uncharacteristic in bland performances of Come a Little Closer and To Whom It May Concern (23035), and *Moten's* energetic Bouncin' Around and New Moten Stomp are only fair examples of his playing (23030). The two remaining Brunswicks are *Andy Kirk's* noisy and gay Sophomore coupled with an easy-going, hot Saturday on 6027, and *Phillips' Louisville Jug Band* in a mediocre That's Your Last, and a decidedly interesting Smackin' the Sax displaying some astounding sax and jug virtuosity.

RUFUS

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Current Importations

Tibor Harsanyi

HARSANYI: *Quatuor pour deux violons, alto et violoncelle* (*Molto allegro; Lento; Allegretto et Presto; Grave et vivace*). Played by the ROTH STRING QUARTET. FRENCH COLUMBIA D-15198 to D-15201 incl. (4 D12s).

HARSANYI: *Sonate pour violoncelle et piano* (*Sempre allegros Adagio; Vivace*). Played by HANS KINDLER, 'cello, and TIBOR HARSANYI, piano. Five sides.

HARSANYI: *Cinq Preludes brefs* (*Lento; Allegro; Allegretto grazioso; Allegro; Lento*). Played by TIBOR HARSANYI, piano. Three sides. FRENCH COLUMBIA DFX5 to DFX8 incl. (4 D12s).

A desultory glance through the new catalogues reveals the inclusion in the evergrowing phonograph repertoire, without previous supplement listings, of several works by younger modern composers whose music is not so familiar on this side of the Atlantic. The names of these newcomers in the field of contemporary composition have been encountered before (we have come across mention of them in foreign musical publications and newspaper reviews) but for the most part their music has been seldom performed in America and, if published, unobtainable from music dealers here. Generally they are represented at private musicales or in the programmes of modern music festivals abroad or, by the good graces of Mrs. Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, at Pittsfield and elsewhere when this godmother of chamber music chooses to introduce new music and new ensembles to local audiences.

Several of these aspiring musicians whose names jumped out at me from the pages of the new French Columbia catalogue as being for the first time represented by the phonograph were those of Bohislav Martinu, Tibor Harsanyi, Marcel Mihalovici and Delayrac (first name not given). Should one read *La Revue Musicale*, for instance, he will have encountered the first three often in the section of that progressive periodical devoted to reviews of new music and first presentations. Martinu (whose music has been played under Mrs. Coolidge's auspices at Pittsfield) is represented by a *Duo pour violon et violoncelle* (DFX1 and DFX2), played by Mlle O. Rithere and M. A. Huvelin; the young Mihalovici has had recorded a *Sonatine pour hautbois et piano* (DFX3 and DFX4), played by the familiar Louis Bleuzet and Thomas Teran; and Dalayrac has a third *Quatuor, Opus 7*, performed by the celebrated Krettly Quartet. Tibor Harsanyi, who, for the present, interests me most—I have heard the records of his *Quatuor à Cordes*, *Sonate pour violoncelle et piano*, and *Cinq Préludes brefs*—should become sufficiently well-known, by reason of these discs, that before long he will have acquired the importance I think is his due.

The scores of Harsanyi's music, with the exception of his string quartet, are difficult to procure in America—the same might be said of the printed music of Martinu, Mihalovici and Dalayrac. And dictionaries bring to light no information regarding Harsanyi. Nevertheless, I have the good fortune to know Mr. Albert van Doorn, 'cellist of the Roth Quartet (which ensemble recorded the Harsanyi work), and to him I owe much of the following information regarding this talented young Hungarian composer.

Tibor Harsanyi is thirty-two years old and before coming to Paris, where he now lives, was a student of Zoltán Kodály, about whom so many inquiries are being made by gramophone enthusiasts. Kodály, however, was not Harsanyi's only mentor as may well be seen from the peculiarly acceptable dissonances pervading most of the younger man's work. Harsanyi's use of polytonality and atonality is a tempered one; yet, nevertheless, it is easily distinguishable that he has studied the scores of Schönberg, Strawinsky and

Milhaud not without being affected. Harsanyi's first important works were a sonatina; a violin sonata, written in 1926; a piano trio, written in the same year; and the quartet, which is recorded, composed a year previously. A *Nonet*, in four movements, is considered Harsanyi's most important and individual chamber work to date. I do not believe that this recent composition has yet performed in America.

The *Quatuor à Cordes* was first performed by the Roth Quartet and is dedicated to them. They included the work on their first programme in America which was at a Coolidge Festival in Pittsfield, 1928. This string quartet should please. Harsanyi's feeling is, in many instances, similar to that of Brahms. Yet the harmonic procedure is distinctly of the twentieth century school. The work has spots of undeniable beauty and gives occasion for some splendid playing by the Roths. The 'cello sonata, played here by Hans Kindler (who makes his appearance on discs for the first time in a long while) and the composer, is considerably more advanced. Harsanyi has succumbed to the cosmopolitan tendencies of Paris, has forsaken Hungarian folk-lore for the moment, and puts a little jazz tempo in his scoring. And I like the way he does it. The piano preludes are of the same period, 1929. The sonata was first performed by Albert van Doorn at the *S. M. I.* concert given in Paris that year. Critical comment abroad was to the effect that in this work, following the above mentioned *Nonet*, Harsanyi displayed an emotional intensity new to his manner.

As I have written elsewhere there is something about Harsanyi's music which appeals; it is clean-cut, decidedly optimistic and imbued with vivid, sparkling fancy. Those in search of new music will discover in the records listed above much that will interest by reason of the tasteful eclecticism and by the manner in which this forceful young musician links his work with both the old and the new.

RICHARD GILBERT

Strauss Waltzes

STRAUSS, JOHANN ("the Younger"): *Album of Six Waltzes*, played by the OPERA ORCHESTRA, BERLIN-CHARLOTTENBURG, and by the BERLIN PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA, conducted by JULIUS PRUEWER. POLYDOR (6D12s).

Geschichten aus dem Wienerwalde (3 parts)

An der schoenen, blauen Donau (2 parts)

Rosen aus dem Sueden (2 parts)

Fruelingsstimmen (1 part)

Kaiser-Walzer (2 parts)

Liebeslieder (2 parts)

I feel that I am speaking for a great many when I say that I have been awaiting for a very long time some really adequate performances of the great Strauss waltzes. About a year ago, I wrote to the Gramophone Shop suggesting that they collect in one of their invaluable albums the best available versions as nearly complete as possible, of some of the waltzes—and now at last they have done it, and one's joy at the undertaking and at the records will I am sure know no bounds. Since then they have even issued two more albums of waltzes which I have not yet had the opportunity of hearing, but I doubt if anyone could better Prüwer. I had already remarked some of the latter's achievements with admiration, but they were not of such a nature as to lead one to assume that he would necessarily be fitted to the task of doing Johann Strauss properly. Before going on to a closer study of the music and individual records, let me hasten to assure everyone that in general, every condition which might make for perfection is more or less well fulfilled. The playing is in some cases extremely suave and beautiful, the recording is clarity itself without undue emphasis or weight, the conducting has almost without exception exactly the proper combination of vivacity and sentiment.

To attempt to describe or convey in words anything of the intoxication of Johann Strauss' music is a thankless and impossible task. Nothing ever written has the same perfect blend of gayety and wistfulness, sensuousness and sprightliness, *abandon* and the most charming courtliness. There is only one word that sums it all up and that is *Vienna*. If one knows something of the perversely changeable nature of the dwellers in that city, of its former splendours, and of the inimitable refinement of sensibility which is still possessed by some remnants of the former society one can appreciate—almost postulate—what the music it produced at the height of its fame must have been like. Nowadays the perfect balance has been destroyed—sadness and melancholy—as they were formerly wont to do but for an instant—have triumphed, but nevertheless, the old spirit still sometimes shines forth unexpectedly and one can see its physical manifestations in the countless cafés, the delightful rococo rooms of the Hofburg and above all in such parks as the Prater, which must once have been crowded from night to morning with gay dancers whirling to these irresistible waltzes.

Some pseudo-serious "music-lovers" of my acquaintance are shocked at my expression of a predilection for Strauss. For them, there is only great, profound music—their idea of which is usually Tchaikowsky—or jazz. And thereby they lose half the joy of living, for there is no pleasure comparable with surrender to these infinitely charming tunes.

Perhaps the most important of the works here presented is the virtually complete recording, in three parts, of the *Tales from the Vienna Woods*, with beautifully played zither solo by Ernst Rommel. In the contrast of the delicate melancholy of theme which enters at the beginning the waltz proper and the light-heartedness of the beginning of the third side, this typifies perfectly the composite Viennese nature. Prüwer plays it throughout with the greatest feeling and attention to nuances without making it seem in the least laboured or overdone. Equally fine is the rendition of *On the Beautiful Blue Danube*. The diversity of Strauss' compositions—they are not merely all just waltzes, as some seem to think—is brought out by giving full scope to the inherent sensuousness of this waltz. The introduction is made tonally of the greatest beauty. The music for the most part is taken more slowly than usual with great gain in effect. Only the end of the Coda could have been made more of. Likewise, in the *Southern Roses* the most ravishingly languorous effect is at times obtained, quite different from the heavy brilliance imparted to it by Stock. The *Liebeslieder*, not so well-known as the others here included, is at first hearing much quieter and less compelling, but proves to contain a rich sentiment which makes it likewise attractive.

Although some purists may sniff at so much pother about mere dance-music, I can only beg them to buy these records and see if they cannot let themselves go somewhat, instead of continuing disdainfully to deprive themselves—like "teetotallers"—of the delights of these sparkling and, be it affirmed with approbation, intoxicating wines.

ROBERT H. S. PHILLIPS

Poulenc

POULENC: *Aubade: Concerto chorégraphique pour piano et 18 instruments* (Toccata et récitatif; Rondeau; Presto et récitatif; Andante; Allegro féroce et conclusion). Played by FRANCIS POULENC and ORCHESTRA DES CONCERTS STRARAM under the direction of WALTER STRARAM. FRENCH COLUMBIA LF33 to LF35 incl. (3 D10s).

IT IS not generally known in America that Francis Poulenc's music was first brought to light by Richard Vines, that unparalleled protagonist of modern music (from Debussy, Satie and Ravel to the young men of today), the Spanish master of the keyboard. This justly celebrated pianist began playing his pupil's music about 1917, at which time the pieces conveyed the impression that Maurice Ravel, despite his bachelorhood, was, indeed, not without artistic progeny. Vines took great delight in displaying his eighteen-year-old protégé's *Pastorale* and *Mouvements perpétuels* and further encouraged Poulenc thereby enabling him to become one of the first of the new school that commenced to speak after the war. But the work which brought Poulenc's name definitely before the public was his *Rapsodie nègre*,

for voice and small chamber orchestra. Mme. Jane Bathori, who has done as much for modern song as Vines has accomplished for contemporary keyboard music (fortunately both are gramophonically represented, performing for the microphone some of the very pieces dedicated to them), organized her now historical series of concerts at the Théâtre du Vieux Colombier. The first, on December 15th, 1917, after an introductory talk by Rene Chalupt, whose verses several members of "The Group of Six" have set to music, presented a *Sonatine* for stringed instruments by Germaine Tailleferre, piano pieces by Durey and Auric, some songs by Honegger (*Alcools* by Appollinaire, I believe) and the Poulenc rhapsody referred to above which, Henry Prunières tells us, achieved a veritable triumph.

This doesn't sound at all like the stories one hears about Auric and Poulenc being absolutely unknown before they attached themselves to Honegger and Milhaud when the nomenclature of "Les Six" was formed—by the imagination of a non-musical press agent! The credit for Poulenc's début, I think, belongs entirely to Vines and Bathori. They had launched others, greater perhaps, before and to date their record stands unblemished.

I cannot understand why certain advertisers, commentators and the like insist upon linking Poulenc's name with ultramodern tendencies in the music of today, or in labelling him an "enfant terrible." He is guilty, at times, of using polytonal devices; however, such dissonances as one finds in his works are never more shocking than the most unrelated tonal combinations used by either Debussy or Ravel. Poulenc has worked out technically very little for himself. But he has applied some of the new methods, discovered by others, to his work in a highly original manner. He is a child of his time, living in the milieu of a greatly sophisticated life, deeply sensitive to his environment—particularly that distinctly Parisian aspect of it. Like Erik Satie, his artistic godfather, Poulenc has the ability to write simply, in a rather unornamented fashion, yet never sacrificing the inherent interest of his work by so doing. Neatness, too, is one of the exemplary characteristics of his music; naturally, conciseness is another.

After the somewhat unearned propaganda given "Les Six," Poulenc improved his technique further by studying with that master of harmony and counterpoint, Charles Koechlin. The Trio for Piano, Oboe and Bassoon, which is recorded, showed us that in a design of simple part writing this young man could incorporate some singularly interesting ideas—he displayed here, too, his uncommon feeling for instrumental *timbre*. The *Aubade* is a further development of Poulenc's ideas as established in *Le Bestiaire* (cited the most perfect example of French vocal music of today—cf. Henry Prunières in *Cahiers d'Art*, 1928), *Les Biches* (in which Poulenc first experimented with the orchestra), and his late *Concert champêtre*, written for harpsichord (or piano) and orchestra.

The *Aubade* may remind some of thematic precedence—for myself, I am charmed by the seductive atmosphere derived from the sensual virtuosity with which Poulenc writes for his various solos and instrumental groupings (the orchestra is minus violins: with the piano are 2 flutes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, a trumpet, 3 kettle drums, 2 violas, 2 violoncellos, and 2 bass viols). Certain themes, it is true, have a Schubertian allure and, more than once, one is reminded of a *pastiche* of various masters from Schubert to Stravinsky. Yet it is evident, from the very first hearing, that in the *Aubade* (which is French for "A Morning Serenade") may be discovered a more mature Poulenc than heretofore encountered. The piano part is felicitously written and shows considerably that Poulenc is in love with this instrument. As for his handling of the others it is enough to say that he is a veritable poet of *timbre* and *sound*.

The *Aubade* was written in 1929 and was first performed at the house of the Vicomte de Noailles, to whom it is dedicated. It is a musical setting for a ballet having not a little to do with Diana and the morning—but we do not have to be bothered with this. That the recording is exceptionally good must be stated; the playing is extremely adept, both by the instrumentalists under Straram and on the piano by the composer—"the most *phonogénique* of our pianists", says André Coeuroy.

RICHARD GILBERT

Land of Laughter

FRANZ LEHAR is one of the few operetta composers of the old school whose fount of graceful melody has not run dry in the jazz age. His romanticism is of the old order, but it is no empty echo of the past; it miraculously maintains a freshness of invention. And when one adds Léhar's felicitous craftsmanship, it is no wonder that his current operettas, *The Land of Laughter* and *Fredericka*, enjoy a success not incomparable even with that of *The Merry Widow*. Léhar is fortunate in having one of the finest operetta voices of all time to project his works—that of Richard Tauber, the German tenor who ranges with ease from Mozartean roles through the lieder repertory to the most fragile popular tune of the moment. Tauber's talents are highly diversified, but they seem to have found their aptest expression in operetta, and particularly those of Léhar. *The Land of Laughter* was written expressly for him and the music fits his style perfectly. The work's popularity in Germany has been so lively that the play's run had scarcely begun before Odeon employed Tauber and Vera Schwarz of the original cast to record the principal airs. For added strength the composer himself was signed to conduct for the phonographic performances.

There are three ten-inch discs and one twelve comprising the eighth leading airs. Tauber sings alone in "Dein ist mein ganzes Herz" and "Immer nur lachen" on O-4949, "Kann es möglich sein?" on O-4951, and "Von Apfelblüten einen Kranz" on O-8376. Vera Schwarz has solo versions of "Lass eine Frau niemals allein" and "Ich möcht' einmal wieder die Heimat sein" on O-11105. The two are heard together in "Beim Tee en deux" on O-4951, and "Wer hat die Liebe ins Herz gesenkt?" on O-8376. Tauber's broad, buoyant singing is heard to its best advantage in the Apfelblüten air, a fine rich tune, as is the other hit of the show "Immer nur lachen." Vera Schwarz is an admirable foil, a soprano of pleasing tonal quality, who possesses an upper register of considerable intensity, firmly yet lightly controlled. The two do particularly well with "Beim Tee," a very deftly constructed and attractive tune, done with fine light rhythmic animation. The other duet and Miss Schwarz's solos are more dramatic, yet Léhar's music is predominately lyrical, and dramatic intensity is never allowed to usurp the absolute reign of tunefulness. The appeal of such discs is pretty nearly universal. Purchasers will enjoy well in advance the music that is sure to reach American stages and screens eventually.

(The American Columbia company has been prompted by the popularity of the imported pressings to issue the twelve-inch coupling and Tauber's "Dein ist mein ganzes Herz" and "Immer nur lachen" in the German supplement of its foreign lists. The order number of the twelve-inch disc is G-55229-F; that of the ten is G-5211-F.)

Tannhaeuser

Columbia's contract with the Bayreuth Festival, which has already given us the Bayreuth Album and *Tristan* in the American Masterworks series, has resulted more recently in an eighteen disc set of *Tannhäuser*, at present released only in Germany and England (Nos. LX-81-98), but presumably to be expected before many months on domestic pressings. Detailed review is reserved until that time; meanwhile Wagnerites should be informed at least in outline of the work's qualities.

Sigismund Pilinszky sings the role of Tannhäuser; Maria Müller that of Elizabeth; Ruth Jost-Arden is Venus; Herbert Janssen, Wolfram; Geza Belti-Pilinszky, Walther; Ivar Andrésen, the Landgraf; and Karl Elmendorf, the conductor. The version used is of course that prepared for Paris, abridged here for recording purposes by Ernest Newman and the late Siegfried Wagner. The excisions have been made discreetly, scarcely a fifth of the complete score has been pruned away, making the set probably the most complete of any of the larger Wagnerian recordings. With the exception of the prelude to the third act, there is no really important cut. The others are distributed in the second and third act; the first is quite complete.

The recording is vigorous in the extreme occasionally bordering on over-resonance, but exceedingly impressive, especially as such moments as the finale of Act 1, the march in Act 2, and the final trio and choral finale. Pilinszky is at the top of his form, singing with a minimum of the emotionalization that not infrequently mars his phonographic performances. But the true stars are the invariable admirable Andrésen, Maria Müller (new, I think, to discs), and Herbert Janssen whose performance of Wolfram's role contributes many of the best moments of the work. The interpretation is soundly "Bayreuth," that is to say, conservative, painstaking, dignified, lacking perhaps in some of the fire of Wagner readings by Coates and others, but exhilarating in its own right.

Altogether the most impressive achievement of the Bayreuth releases to date, and a long-awaited set, filling one of the largest gaps remaining in the Wagnerian discographic repertory.

Symphonie Fantastique

Weingartner's Columbia recording of Berlioz' symphony was the first full-length symphony to be produced by the electrical process, and its fame still survives the four or five turgid years since its release. It is not surprising that the phonograph has again turned to Berlioz. The ideal man has been picked this time, for which the possible exception of Harty, there is no one better suited to conduct Berlioz for recording than Pierre Monteux. French H. M. V. issues the set on Nos. W-1100-5. The once-flamboyant pages sound more than once bloodless and arid to sophisticated modern ears, but Monteux labors heroically to give the work a maximum of conviction. In the same release Monteux is to be heard conducting an *Interlude dramatique* by his colleague, Coppola—a work of almost hysterical stridency and violence. The microphone is put to severe test to handle its intensity, but acquits itself surprisingly well.

Assorted Pianists

Godowsky adds to his recording affiliations with a contribution to the Polydor repertory: Rachmaninoff's ("the") C sharp minor prelude and a Dohnany capriccio. . . . Darius Milhaud is to be heard as a pianist on two French Columbia discs, one devoted to excerpts from his Saudades do Brazil and the other to his Printemps. . . . For the same company Richard Vines plays Albeniz' Granada and Blancafort's Parc d'Attractions, and Casadesu plays the fourth Chopin Ballade. . . . Rosenthal plays an original Papillons, Chopin's black keys etude and a mazurka (Parlophone). . . . The scant list of Mozart piano concertos is augmented by Mlle. Tagliafero's performance of "The Coronation" concerto, D major, with the Padeloup orchestra under Reynaldo Hahn (Decca). . . .

R. D. D.

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The Phonophile's Bookshelf

Hogarth Essays

CONTEMPORARY MUSIC. By Robert H. Hull. (No. X in the Hogarth Essays, Second Series). London, The Hogarth Press. 44 pp. 2 shillings.

DELIUS. By Robert H. Hull. (No. XII in the Hogarth Essays, second series). London, The Hogarth Press. 45 pp. 2 shillings.

My attention was called to these attractive booklets by the slip cover of Eric Walter White's book on Stravinski, reviewed in the January P. M. R., and as review copies were kindly supplied at my request, I am glad to be able to bring them to the attention of our readers, to most of whom they should be of interest and some value. I had not previously come across any of Mr. Hull's critical writings, but these concise, temperate little essays reveal him as a critic of sober merit; scarcely a thinker of great originality or penetration, but gifted with an ability for detached, well-poised examination of controversial musical subjects. He has a better perspective on contemporary music and composers than most critics, and his sanely considered studies present not so much belligerent or "conclusive" findings, as an intelligent compass by which one may orient himself in these days of apparently shifting musical values.

Contemporary music with its by now well-established trends is the logical outgrowth of developments that can be traced far back. Mr. Hull attempts to show which trends promise the greatest musical fruitfulness and which are bound to end in sterility. In *Contemporary Music* he traces briefly but not hastily the revolution and consequent evolution of musical texture, from the horizontal writing of Bach to the mainly vertical texture of most modern composers. Haydn and Mozart were the first to relax technical discipline as far as texture is concerned; Beethoven carried the process a step further; Wagner succeeded in combining the best classical tradition with a further development of the dynamic methods of Beethoven, and elaborate the early chromatic experiments of Spohr into a permanent part of the musical language. Wagner's "condensation of musical thought" was carried on by his successors, reaching perhaps its final goal in the later music of Schönberg.

Schönberg, Bartok, Delius, Debussy, Strauss, Elgar, Scriabin, Stravinski, Honegger, and their contributions are discussed; also the relative positions of "classical" and "jazz" music,—the latter an excellent estimate of the weaknesses of both sides' pronunciamientos. Mr. Hull pleads for a measurement of dance music's values by standards of its own, not by the standards applicable to classical music. He finds in the development of the chamber orchestra and the attention it is receiving from modern composers hope for a reaction against the vertical writing of so much contemporary music, a return to a horizontal texture, bringing with it a sane conception of melody. Many of his points have been discussed with greater analytical detail by Prof. George Dyson, but Hull presents the meat of these arguments in perhaps more easily digestible form, at least for the musical layman.

The study of Delius is less satisfactory, although Mr. Hull's intention of presenting a balanced estimate of his music is an admirable one. Yet much as Delius has suffered from ecstatic and too often non-critical praise, the peculiar qualities of his music—which can only be implied by a technical analysis of its texture—must be examined and at least partly exposed in any study that would afford a genuine approach to his particular types of feeling. The final purpose is indeed "to suggest an explanation that may fairly account for the greatness of Delius," but Mr. Hull is forced to take refuge in the summing up of Prof. Dyson. There is still much to

be said about Delius that has not been said by either such passionate proponents as Heseltine, or less biased observers as Dyson and Hull. Yet Mr. Hull does contribute to our estimate of Delius by his emphasis on Delius' economy of statement and formal coherence. Read by one only slightly familiar with Delius' music Hull's essay can hardly serve as an Open Sesame to that previous literature; the experienced Delian, however, will find in it a sane presentation of both strengths and weaknesses of the composer, necessary to a more penetrative examination.

Educational Concert Series

EDUCATIONAL CONCERT SERIES, STUDY MATERIAL. By Lillian Luverne Baldwin. Published for the Music Department of the Cleveland Public Schools in co-operation with the Cleveland Orchestra, by the A. S. Gilman Company, Cleveland.

S. T. R.'s letter in the correspondence column of this issue describes the educational work that is being done in Cleveland under the auspices of the Cleveland Orchestra, and mentions the preparatory work that is done in the schools and clubs. Five of the booklets used in conjunction with this preparatory work have been sent to us by the Gilman Company. No information is available concerning the price, but no doubt any reader who is interested in obtaining copies for his own information or for class use may do so for a nominal cost directly from the A. S. Gilman Company, 623 East St. Clair Avenue, Cleveland.

Of the two "Young People's Concert," one is devoted to a Mozart program and the other to "Impressions of Italy." Only works which have been recorded are included on the programs, and the booklets contain notes on the composers and analyses (with thematic illustrations) of the pieces. Also references to recordings and a brief bibliography. The notes are conservatively and simply written, and give an excellent approach to the music. The thematic quotations are particularly helpful.

The three Children's Concert programs are: "From the Land of Make-Believe" (works by Mendelssohn, Liadoff, Grieg, Humperdinck, and Wagner), "Little Folk's Program" (a Mozart overture and menuet and Tchaikowsky's Nut-Cracker suite), and "Dance Types" (pieces by Chopin, Bach, Mozart, Strauss, Bizet, and Grieg). The notes here are untechnical, yet intelligent. There is no "writing down" to the children, and the essential information is clearly presented.

The booklets run from 14 to 20 pages, and are very deftly adapted to their purpose, as well as for home instruction, or annotations to accompany broadcast programs.

Brunswick Supplement

The Brunswick Radio Corporation has just issued a supplement No. 1, describing the latest issues of its International Hall of Fame Series, including a selected group of domestic recordings by the Cleveland and Minneapolis Symphonies. This attractive pamphlet testifies in impressive fashion to the remarkable work Brunswick has been doing in giving American release to some of the most notable recordings of the last two years. The Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, and Wagner groups are already quite extensive, and many works are included that are of truly exceptional worth: the series by Richard Strauss, Wolff, Brailowsky, Hedwig von Debieka, Huni-Mihacsek, and Prüwer rank among the outstanding recordings of all time.

The booklet is available from any Brunswick dealer, or directly from the Brunswick Radio Corporation, 120 West 42nd Street, New York City.

Music History In Outline

AN OUTLINE OF MUSICAL HISTORY. By Thomas J. Hewitt and Ralph Hill. London, the Hogarth Press. 2 Vols. 98 and 146 pages.

This product of the press of "Leonard and Virginia Woolf" should be welcomed with much favour by all who are anxious for a handy reference book giving names and dates of composers, clear expositions of various formal terms such as figured bass, fugue, etc., as well as a very good view of the general development of music and an idea of the compositions and art of the various composers. As the preface states, this book is intended to meet the requirements of those whose interests in music has been stimulated by the gramophone and wireless, and who wish to obtain a general idea of the subject. Writing with this purpose, the authors have naturally restricted themselves to more or less accepted points of view and apportioned their space in the same manner.

Volume One ("From the earliest times to Handel and Bach") is by Mr. Hewitt, Volume Two ("From C. P. E. Bach to Modern Music") by Mr. Hill. The first is perhaps the more scholarly, or at least concerned with scholarly aspects of the subject. This is no doubt the outcome of our wrong attitude in regarding the music of this period chiefly as something useful to study and know about, but as having relatively little beauty or worth of its own. There are numerous anecdotes quoted, such as the well-known one about the composition of Palestrina's *Missa Papae Marcelli*, although this is not absolutely vouched for. Now and then one comes across a good description like that of the Venetian polyphonic school, or a succinct biography such as that of Bach. As is quite natural, some statements are at least capable of question, such as the one that Greek drama "may be accounted the forerunner of modern opera" or the classing of Elgar with Byrd and Purcell as a possible candidate for England's greatest composer. As a whole the second volume is not only the more interesting but the better, but this is perhaps natural when one considers how much less time it has to cover and how much more space it takes to do it. There is scarcely a composer of any note in the nineteenth century whose name is not mentioned, with usually a very excellent outline of his music and its character.

A fact that should particularly recommend these valuable little books to the musical amateur or the gramophone enthusiast are the apparently very complete and accurate indices; e.g., the definition of a *figured bass* which is seemingly given only in passing on page 64 (Vol. I) is listed in its proper place.

R. H. S. P.

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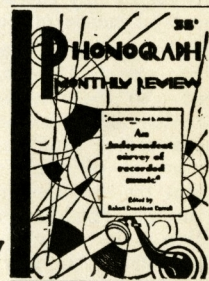
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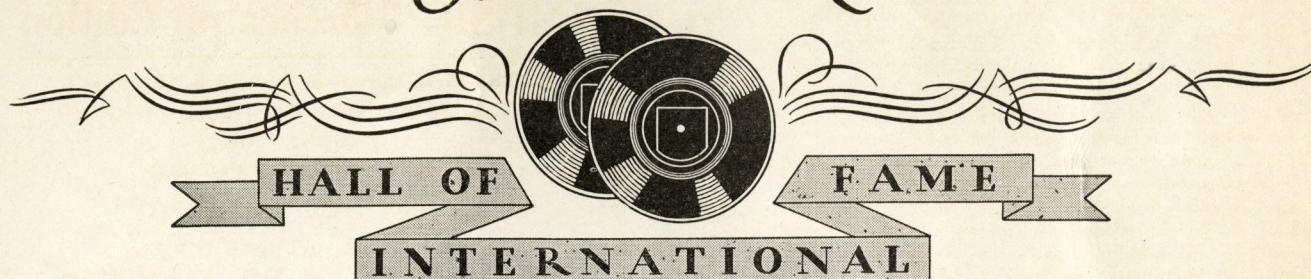
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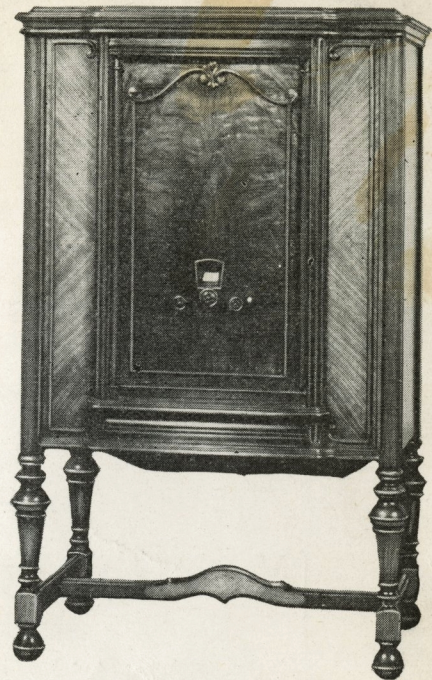
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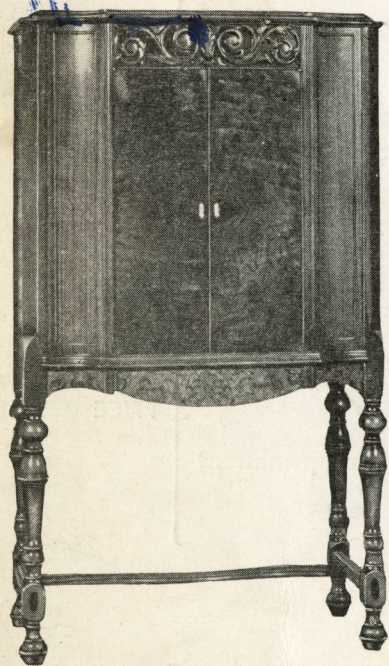


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